Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP)

2026 - 2029

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES

Addysg a Gwella Iechyd Cymru (AaGIC)

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

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IMTP 2026-29

Plan on a page

What guides our work

Vision
Transforming the workforce for a Healthier Wales

Purpose
As part of the NHS, to work with partners to develop a skilled and sustainable workforce that improves care and population health

Values
- Respect for All
- Together as a Team
- Ideas that Improve

National context and alignment to our plan

- NHS Wales Planning Framework
- Cabinet Secretary priorities
- Welsh Government Remit Letter
- Improving Performance Together
- HEIW statutory functions
- HEIW & SCW Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care

Our strategic intent

Strategic Priority 1
Shaping the conditions for a productive, healthy and engaged workforce

Strategic Priority 2
Optimising Leadership and Management Development

Strategic Priority 3
Reshaping and transforming our current workforce models

Strategic Priority 4
Transforming Education and Training to meet changing needs

Strategic Priority 5
Future focused health workforce planning

Our strategic delivery

Development Objectives
to deliver our strategic priorities

Our golden threads

- Equality and Diversity
- Quality
- Sustainability
- Welsh Language

Core Delivery and Supporting Work Programmes

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Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

Foreword

We are pleased to present the Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP) for 2026-29. HEIW is the national strategic workforce organisation for NHS Wales and is part of the NHS. We work with other NHS Wales organisations, Welsh Government and a range of partners to develop a skilled and sustainable workforce that improves care and population health.

This plan has been developed at a time when the NHS is subject to considerable operational and financial pressures. Positive progress has been made over recent years in growing the workforce and the training pipeline to address the significant workforce deficits that have affected the quality and cost of services post COVID. The predicted burden of disease and the age profile of the Welsh population will, however, contribute to increasing demand for healthcare for the foreseeable future. Meeting this demand will necessitate agility and imagination when transforming and designing services, developing roles, educating our workforce, providing system leadership, and responding to new and unforeseen challenges. Supporting our workforce to be as productive as possible will be at the centre of all of our work programmes.

Our plan identifies five strategic priorities that aspire to the ambition set out in the Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care in Wales. We will, by 2030, have a motivated, engaged and valued Health and Social Care workforce with the capacity, competence and confidence to meet the needs of the people of Wales. However, we recognise the commitment by the new government to develop a new longer term workforce plan by the autumn and this will play a critical role in informing our IMTP in future years.

As was the case last year, the Welsh Government has provided HEIW with specific guidance on priorities through a Remit Letter containing a clear statement of expectations, priority areas and associated funding for delivery. These are consistent with our organisational Strategic Priorities 2026-29, and will be delivered through our Development Objectives for 2026-27.

Our plan also presents our Core Delivery Work Programmes, which comprise those functional responsibilities that continue year on year. These include core activities within commissioning, providing education and training to a wide range of professionals in Wales, NHS careers, workforce planning and transformation, and leadership development.

The Education and Training Plan for 2026-27 already approved by Welsh Government focuses on continuing to support key programmes that will support staffing and services across NHS Wales, and which form a substantial component of our IMTP.

Despite the constrained financial position, the IMTP is supported by a balanced resource plan for 2026/27, reflecting prioritisation, choices and risk that has been discussed and agreed with the Board.

We look forward to delivering on another ambitious set of objectives this year, with the support of our NHS colleagues and other partners, and through the professionalism and enthusiasm of our HEIW staff.

We are confident that our Integrated Medium Term Plan describes how we will continue to deliver a sustainable workforce that will enable the delivery of high quality and safe care to the people of Wales.



Ms Alex Howells
Chief Executive



Dr Christopher Jones
CBE, Chair

Chapter 1:
Who we are and our role in NHS Wales

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Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

This chapter describes who we are and what we do for the NHS in Wales. It outlines our vision, purpose, and our key functions, and identifies our recent achievements and our impact.



Vision and purpose

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) is the statutory education and strategic workforce organisation for NHS Wales. We are a Special Health Authority with an all-Wales remit, and we work with partners across health, education, regulatory and professional bodies and government.

Purpose

Our purpose is:

"as part of the NHS, to work with partners to develop a skilled and sustainable workforce that improves care and population health".

Vision

Our vision is:

"transforming the workforce for a Healthier Wales".

Our culture, values, and behaviours

We strive to create a compassionate, inclusive, and collaborative culture with high levels of staff engagement, and a focus on our values and behaviours that have been developed with our staff:



The principles of quality, equality, diversity, and sustainability are embedded across our activities as an organisation, recognising the breadth of impact we can have on the whole workforce.

Our functions

Planning, commissioning and delivering education and training

HEIW is responsible for the planning, commissioning, quality management and in some cases the delivery of education and training across a wide range of health professionals. Our responsibilities encompass undergraduate and postgraduate education and training, post-registration development, and work-based learning. We provide a significant volume of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for a number of professions, supported by our digital learning platform, Y Ty Dysgu.

We are responsible for producing an annual HEIW Education and Training Plan (ETP). This makes strategic recommendations to the Welsh Government based on input and advice from NHS organisations and other partners, to inform the volume of training places that need to be commissioned.

Our IMTP and ETP are interdependent; each is crucial to the delivery of the other, and together they encapsulate the full scope of HIEW's activities. Delivering the recommendations contained in the 2026-27 ETP is, therefore, crucial to the delivery of this IMTP.

Leadership, culture and succession planning

HEIW plays a key role in designing and delivering national leadership development programmes to NHS Wales, with a view to improving talent management, supporting succession planning, and creating compassionate and collaborative cultures. Our Gwella Portal serves as a central hub for leadership development and hosts range of evidenced-based culture and leadership tools, including a supervision hub to support staff at all levels.

Workforce strategy, planning, and intelligence

HEIW plays a critical role in ensuring that NHS Wales undertakes robust workforce planning at both local and national levels. We provide strategic leadership and resources; we have developed national systems that provide workforce data and intelligence; and we collaborate with other NHS Wales organisations to improve the capture of the data required to generate accurate and accessible workforce intelligence and insights.

We also develop and implement national strategic workforce plans for key professions and services (including nursing, mental health, and genomics) in line with national priorities.

Workforce development and transformation

We play a critical role in developing new workforce solutions to address service challenges and workforce pressures. We work across various health professions and as part of NHS Wales National Programmes. We design and support delivery of the annual NHS Wales Staff Survey and develop programmes that meet national needs such as retention. We design new and enhanced roles, support multi-disciplinary working, encourage staff to work at the 'top of their licence', and support skills development, continuous professional development and career pathway development. This work is key to optimising the workforce and supporting productivity.

Attraction, careers and widening access

HEIW leads the strategic framework for health careers in Wales, designed to attract new talent into the NHS and to strengthen the reputation of Wales as a place to train and work. We support the entire career journey, from recruitment into training to ongoing professional development, and provide platforms and frameworks to support professional growth.

We are committed to reducing barriers for underrepresented groups and to ensuring that the workforce comprises a diverse range of skills and experiences.

Professional support for the people profession

HEIW has a statutory duty to support the development of the People profession within NHS Wales. Although, unlike the Finance Profession, there is no dedicated People Academy, we use resources creatively to support systematic and structured approaches to the development and professionalisation of the People Profession, and we have created frameworks, career pathways, and training to build sustainable, inclusive, and skilled People teams.

Revalidation

HEIW manages the appraisal and revalidation process for doctors in Wales through its Revalidation Support Unit (RSU). We support General Practitioner (GP) revalidation and the quality management of appraisals, and we provide online systems like the Medical Appraisal Revalidation System (MARS). We also facilitate the collection of CPD, patient/colleague feedback, and support trainee revalidation by capturing significant event information and ensuring revalidation requirements are met at the point of Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT).



Our achievements in 2025-26

We are on course to deliver against the majority of planned activities that were identified as priorities in our IMTP for 2025-26. The following section provides a snapshot of some of the key achievements and highlights the impact of our work.

Workforce Planning

Following approval of the 2025/26 Education and Training Plan, £294.2m was commissioned to support the future workforce pipeline, representing 84% of HEIW's revenue allocation. Recruitment performance remained strong across medical and dental education, with over 95% fill rates across most postgraduate medical specialties, 100% fill rates in GP training and Foundation programmes, and the lowest foundation vacancy rate in the UK. Dental Foundation Training achieved a 100% fill rate and Dental Core Training 96%, while resident doctor attrition remains below 4%. Pharmacy Foundation training achieved a 100% fill rate, with attrition reduced from 10% to 3%. Recruitment to the pre-registration pharmacy technician programme reached 95%, with attrition reduced to 0% and 98% of completers remaining in Wales.

Recruitment to nursing programmes has shown variation across fields, with Autumn 2025 fill rates at 76% overall and lower recruitment in some areas, including learning disability and mental health nursing. Attrition across nursing and midwifery programmes remains below Key Performance Indicator (KPI) thresholds, with nursing attrition at 5.6% against a 10% KPI and midwifery at 4.6% against an 8% KPI. Midwifery recruitment has remained above 98% over five consecutive years.

Education to employment processes ensured 100% allocation of nursing and midwifery graduates through streamlining, with 85% of bursary supported Allied Health Professional and Healthcare Science graduates estimated to be employed in Wales. Learner satisfaction remains strong, with 78–82% of resident doctors reporting satisfaction with their training and 89% of optometry students rating their training experience positively. The General Pharmaceutical Council has formally accredited the multi-sector Foundation Pharmacist Training Programme, enabling graduates from 2026 to qualify as Independent Prescribers.

Education and workforce transformation

Throughout this year, we have continued with an ambitious programme of reform and development across our education and workforce functions.

The Endoscopy Academy for Wales was launched in January 2024 and offered a consistent all-Wales approach within a central unit supported by local training. As this was a transitional plan, 2025-26 has afforded us an opportunity to work with partners to develop a proposal for a sustainable academy model to meet the needs of the endoscopy workforce across Wales, including a key facility within the Llantrisant Health Park.

During 2024-25, the Academy delivered 34 training events, training 447 NHS staff. This included 204 Nurses, 170 Medical

and non-medical staff, and 73 Admin/Clerical staff. An accelerated training pilot demonstrated up to a 45% reduction in training time, supporting faster service capacity development. Delivery in 2025 maintained high satisfaction levels, with an average delegate rating of 6.5 out of 7.

The multi-professional Primary Care Education and Training Academy continues to drive forward opportunities to support policy imperatives such as Community by Design.

These academies enable a multi-professional primary care workforce to develop the skills, capabilities and confidence required to deliver high-quality care in community settings. This model represents a 'once for Wales' approach, ensuring national consistency while allowing delivery to be tailored to local population needs. Delivery to date has focused on priority workforce areas, including the GP Nurse Foundation Programme, multi-professional competency and capability development for Urgent Primary Care and Musculoskeletal Services and CPD for the operational support workforce, including practice managers.

The Primary Care Education and Training Academy has strengthened workforce capability and resilience across community settings. Protected learning time has been embedded in primary care through support to 372 GP teams, reinforcing a culture of continuous development. Eighty-three nurses have completed the GP Nurse Foundation Programme, enhancing place-based, preventative care aligned to the national competency framework. Six Integrated Care GP Fellows have been appointed in Hywel Dda University Health Board, contributing to frailty-focused care, research activity and improved GP recruitment and retention in rural areas. Over 200 nursing students and 55 supervisors have been supported through community placements, increasing exposure to primary care careers and stimulating demand for community-based roles. Delivery of more than 60 locally led programmes has strengthened clinical capability for over 300 learners, while established peer networks for GP nurses, healthcare support workers and practice managers have improved professional support and workforce sustainability across Wales.

The use of the Y Ty Dysgu Learning Management System (LMS) continues to expand and develop to improve the quality and accessibility of multi-professional workforce learning. The platform now has over 35,000 active users, with consistent month-on-month growth of 3-4%, and hosts over 400 learning modules and 200 live events. A standardised approach is taken to evaluation to support more informed decisions about education design and investment.

Recent additions include Women's Health education, Perinatal Mental Health, NEST (Children's rights), CAMHS, Childhood obesity, Health Inequalities (AHP), Person Centred Dementia Care and use of Medication and Genomics.

Y Ty Dysgu hosts the updated National Clinical Services Accreditation (NCSA) programme for community pharmacy, with the mandatory generic skills section now completed by over 7,000 users.

Our simulation-based education work is driving forward innovation and quality in this increasingly important area of

education and training that plays a vital role in the development of a safe, high-quality NHS workforce. Simulation education and CPD activity has reached over 500 learners and stakeholders, including 165 attendees at the 2025 national conference, and 227 simulation faculty trained since 2022. This work is underpinned by national and international collaboration on development of simulation standards which are now being promoted across Wales, and foundational work to support future innovation in immersive and simulation-based education.

The Healthcare Science programme (HCS) has delivered significant structural improvements to professional visibility, development and governance. The UK's first comprehensive Healthcare Science professions framework has been published, covering 100% of professions, with profession-specific career progression routes developed for 94% (30 of 32). Education gaps have been mapped across all professions, with gaps addressed either through commissioned education or incorporated into HEIW plans. The first profession-specific research and innovation strategy in the UK has also been published. Between 2024 and 2025, turnover across Healthcare Science professions reduced by 47%, representing the largest relative improvement across professional areas. Health Board registration policies are now in place in three Health Boards and in development in a further three.

The Strategic Allied Health Professions (AHP) Workforce Development Plan has progressed a series of short-term actions to address identified workforce challenges. A national Multi-Professional Supervision Hub has been launched and, within ten months, engaged over 2,000 users with more than 6,600 visits. Initiatives to support recruitment, attraction and enhanced opportunities for AHP support workers have been implemented. Applications to national leadership programmes have increased, with a 55% rise in applications to the Wales Clinical Leadership Training Fellowship and a 192% increase for the Advanced Clinical Leadership Programme. A multi-professional workforce planning 'one stop shop' resource has recorded over 1,000 workforce engagement interactions since its launch in October 2025. A national Early Years Health Inequalities network has also been established, with 100 active members.

Implementing our Digital and Data Strategy

Implementation of the HEIW Digital and Data Strategy has progressed during 2025-26 through the introduction of the new Codi platform. Codi was launched in December 2025 and consolidates multiple legacy workforce systems into a single modern platform supporting over 10,000 resident doctors, foundation dentists, trainee pharmacists and other clinical professionals. The first phase has modernised ways of working and streamlined processes, with improvements in data quality providing a trusted source of workforce intelligence for HEIW and Health Boards. The platform strengthens compliance with cyber and technology standards and is projected to deliver £276,000 per year in licence savings. It also reduces manual input requirements, releasing over 300 hours per month in efficiency gains.

Our digital function is maturing in line with our Data and digital strategy. Our data and analytics portal has been developed significantly during this year as we strive to

become a data-driven organisation. There has been a significant improvement in education to employment pipeline intelligence, workforce planning (supply and demand data modelling), Electronic Staff Record (ESR), Workforce Race Equality Standards (WRES) as well as responses to specific requirements such as pay modelling, staff survey and student surveys.

Leadership and culture

National leadership programmes continue to strengthen succession and system capability across NHS Wales. Fourteen participants from the first Aspiring Executive Director cohort have progressed into executive roles, and 34 of 36 Graduate Management trainees remain employed within NHS Wales, supporting continuity and internal talent pipelines.

The All-Wales Retention Programme has delivered measurable system impact, with national turnover reducing from 8.9% to 7.6% and voluntary resignation rates falling by 17%, equating to an estimated 1,167 staff retained between December 2023 and July 2025.

The NHS Wales Staff Survey response rate has increased to 30%, representing 34,645 staff responses, strengthening national insight into workforce experience and engagement.

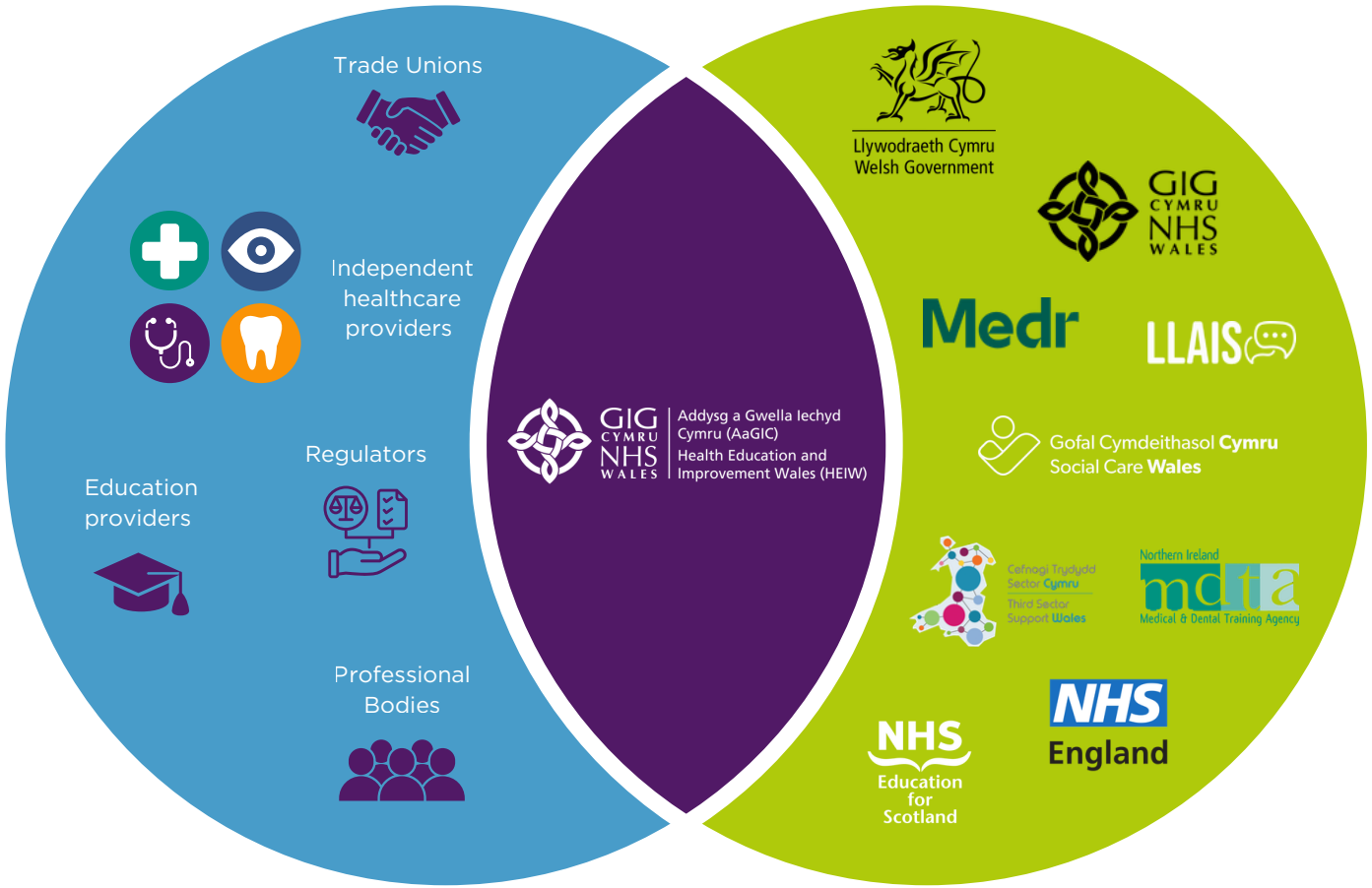
National priorities

Through our national programme function, HEIW has progressed several All-Wales workforce solutions aligned to priority service areas.

In perioperative services, a baseline assessment of the theatre workforce has been completed and regional workshops delivered to inform education and leadership development for perioperative staff. In urgent and emergency care, the multi-professional Urgent Care Practitioner Competency Framework has been completed and is currently being evaluated by users, with supporting learning resources in development. A national Palliative and End of Life Care Competency Framework has been launched, with e-learning resources being rolled out to support implementation across Wales. In cancer services, preparation is underway to introduce the ACCEND framework from 2026 to support the specialist cancer nursing workforce. Collectively, these frameworks and education resources provide consistent national standards to support workforce development in priority service areas.



HEIW and our partners



NHS Wales partners

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

Hywel Dda University Health Board

Powys Teaching Health Board

Swansea Bay University Health Board

Public Health Wales NHS Trust

Velindre University NHS Trust

Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust

Digital Health and Care Wales

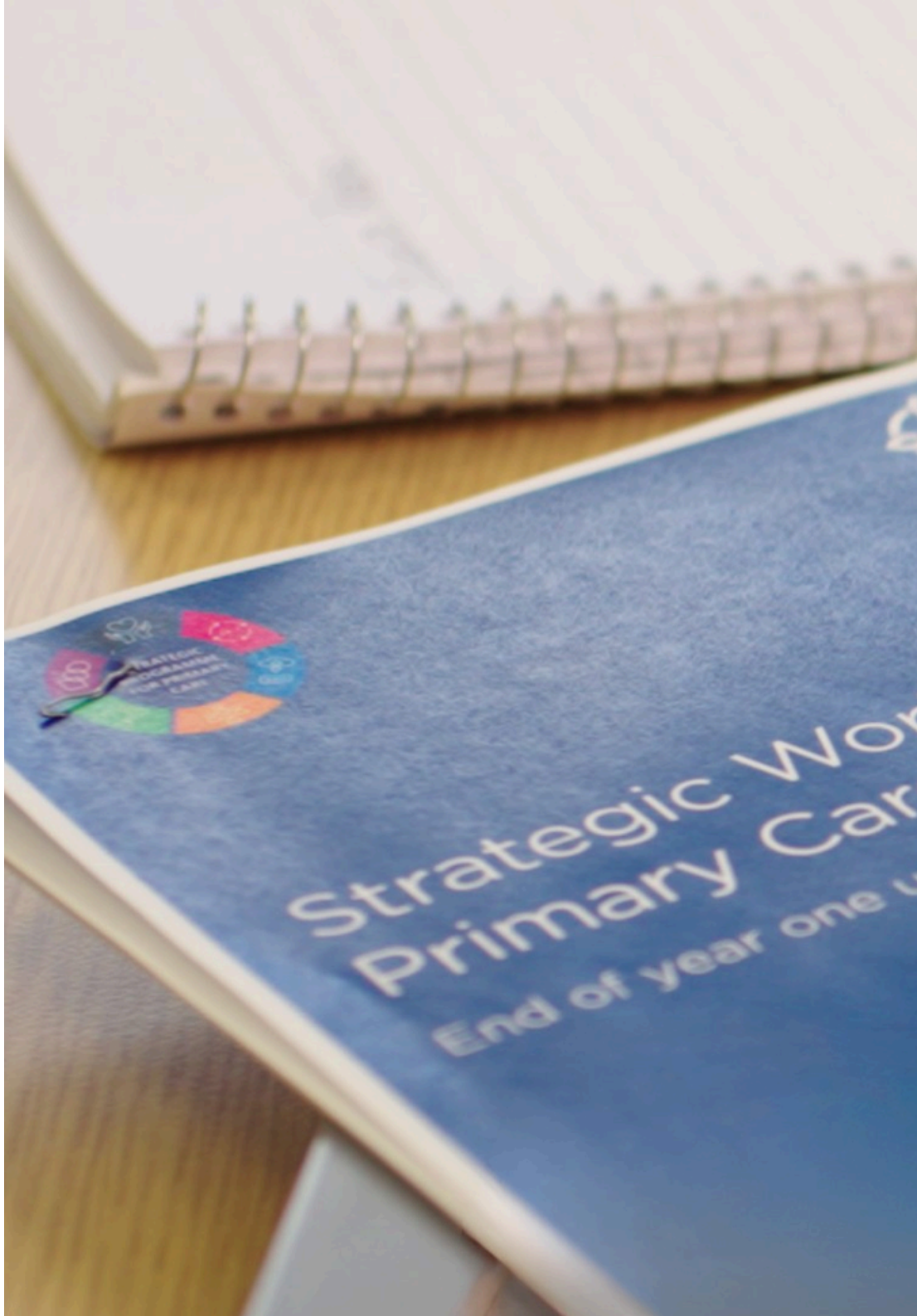
NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

NHS Wales Performance and Improvement

Chapter 2:
Strategic Context

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Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

This chapter identifies the strategic context in which we operate by means of a PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental) analysis. It identifies those expectations and national priorities that have shaped the content of our IMTP, and describes how the development of our plan has been informed by engagement with stakeholders.



Political Factors

A Healthier Wales

A Healthier Wales has continued to be the long-term plan for health and social care in Wales, and has a key focus on:

- Accelerating care closer to home
- Prioritising the deployment of digital tools
- Supporting preventative, integrated and sustainable health and social care.

The plan was refreshed in 2024 and continues to reflect the central role of workforce to the provision of health and social care. Three actions have been identified which are aligned with the Workforce Strategy and which are reflected in our plan:

- Deliver an inclusive, flexible, multi-professional workforce able to work across sectors and traditional boundaries by ensuring the Workforce Strategy is implemented and underpinned by excellent workforce data and planning to attract, recruit and retain talented people to train, work and live in Wales.
- Embed compassionate leadership and build a positive culture across the NHS and social care system in Wales to become exemplar employers for health, well-being, diversity and inclusion at work with the intent to share this approach across the wider economy.
- Deliver effective and efficient deployment of the workforce to make the most of our investment in the skills of the workforce and technology to deliver safe patient outcomes.

Ministerial Advisory Group on Performance and Productivity Report

The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on NHS Wales Performance and Productivity report, published in April 2025, was an independent review commissioned by the Welsh Government to address significant performance issues in NHS Wales. Chaired by Sir David Sloman, the group made 29 recommendations focused on enhancing productivity, reducing waiting lists, and improving patient care across planned care, diagnostics, cancer performance, and urgent / emergency care.

The report had significant implications for HEIW, including the expectation that we would lead on national and regional training solutions for "fragile services" like pathology and endoscopy, address workforce gaps that hamper productivity, and support the high impact initiatives to improve patient care pathways. We will continue to respond to its recommendations during the next IMTP planning period, focusing particularly on clinical leadership, the development of operational managers and endoscopy.

Improving Performance Together: Priority Delivery Actions for Better Health and Care 2025/26

'Improving Performance Together: Priority Delivery Actions for Better Health and Care 2025/26' is a framework of key actions announced in July 2025 by the Cabinet Secretary, focused on:

- Modernising leadership and culture
- Getting better at regional working
- Improving openness, accountability and collaboration
- More effective prevention
- Putting more services into the community
- Realising the potential of digital and innovation

HEIW is uniquely placed to contribute to a number of these objectives, not least modernising leadership and culture, more effective prevention, and realising the potential of digital and innovation. During 2025-26 we sought to map the objectives contained in our 2025-28 IMTP to the key priorities described in Improving Performance Together, ensuring that the Board remained appraised of HEIW's ongoing contribution. For 2026-29, it is our intention that the aims of Improving Performance Together will be more explicitly captured by our IMTP's objectives, enabling greater impact and more robust monitoring.

Community by Design

NHS Wales 'Community by Design' (CbD) will prioritise service planning from the perspective of the service user. It assumes, unless proven otherwise, that care can be provided in the community setting, utilising hospital-based care only when this is required by more complex or escalating clinical need.

CbD aims to create sustainable, integrated, and proactive health and care services closer to home, focusing on prevention, self-care, and collaboration across multi-professional teams. It requires engagement by all clinicians across the pathway to understand population health needs and to bring the most effective and proportionate solutions to the community.

Delivering CbD and supporting new ways of delivering care will require HEIW to facilitate the development of new and redesigned workforce models and the revision of the NHS Wales workforce skills mix.

All-Wales Maternity and Neonatal Assurance Assessment Report

The All-Wales Maternity and Neonatal Assurance Assessment report (published February 2026) highlights critical vulnerabilities in Welsh maternity services. HEIW has a critical role in addressing the recommendations contained in the report, noting particularly, the urgent need for a multi-disciplinary workforce plan that can resolve chronic staffing shortages and skill-mix issues that prevent the workforce from keeping pace with rising service demand and complex care needs.

Marmot Nation

The Welsh Government has, as part of its ongoing work to tackle health inequalities, committed Wales to become the world's first 'Marmot nation'. The commitment to adopt Sir Michael Marmot's eight principles builds on Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act – which already mandates that HEIW consider the long-term impact of its decisions on future generations – and will require HEIW to focus on the workforce development, leadership training, and the educational strategies needed to address the social determinants of health.

Senedd Election

The Senedd election may lead to changes in national policy priorities for health and social care. While the overall drivers of workforce demand are likely to remain consistent, HEIW will need to retain flexibility in how we deliver our plan so that we can respond to any changes in ministerial priorities or system direction that emerge over the coming months.

At the same time, our core role in supporting education, workforce development and the flow of graduates into the NHS will remain essential regardless of political context. This IMTP therefore aims to balance responsiveness to emerging priorities with the need to maintain stability in education supply and workforce planning.

Economic Factors

NHS Wales Financial Position

NHS Wales is facing significant financial challenges resulting from a combination of factors including increased demand, inflation and increased operating costs. The financial outlook for 2026/27 is challenging. The Welsh Government's Value and Sustainability Board is focusing on areas of waste and opportunity for improved effectiveness and efficiency. One of the three priority areas relates to workforce, recognising the recent growth in the size and cost of the NHS Wales workforce and the imperative to optimise this investment. This presents opportunities to integrate HEIW work programmes more closely, as well as risks, such as graduate employment opportunities.

As an integral part of the NHS Wales system, HEIW is subject to these challenges, and is expected to identify potential for savings and efficiencies and to maximise the impact and benefit of our financial allocation.

NHS Pay

Compounding the range of financial challenges evident across NHS Wales, the system faces critical pay challenges associated with below-inflation wage awards. Continued financial pressures will limit the ability of NHS Wales to offer higher pay increases without impacting services; some Unions have expressed concern with recent pay awards and ongoing financial pressures may result in continued disquiet and enduring risks.

For HEIW, staff pay challenges will impact recruitment and retention, with implications for health board workforce requirements and the efficacy of education and training pipelines.

Sustainability Challenges in the Education Sector

Welsh higher education institutions (HEIs) currently play a critical role in supporting the development of our future workforce pipeline and are the recipients of some £250m of health education contracts annually.

The UK higher education sector is facing significant financial and operational challenges. These are driven by a combination of factors including high inflation, recruitment instability and demographic uncertainty, volatility in

international student recruitment, high staff turnover and industrial action, along with the cost of maintaining ageing estates and infrastructure. This has been brought into sharper focus by recent developments at Cardiff University that have implications for its nursing programme.

Looking ahead, HEIW needs to ensure that its future strategy takes account of these challenges, working with partners to move to a more sustainable approach.

Sociological Factors

The Chief Scientific Officer's NHS in 10+ Years Report

The Chief Scientific Officer's analysis highlights that an ageing population, increasing complexity of need, and growing levels of long-term conditions will place escalating pressure on health services over the next decade. It suggests that existing models of care will not remain sustainable without redesign, and that prevention and earlier intervention will become increasingly important.

For HEIW, this reinforces the need to support workforce developments that enable new models of care, particularly in community settings, and to ensure the workforce has the skills and flexibility required to respond to changing patterns of need. These changes are likely to lead to more people working outside hospital settings and a greater need for new and extended skills in primary and community care, and this will shape how we educate, train and prepare the workforce.

The importance of using digital and technological solutions to improve productivity and support earlier diagnosis has grown further since the Chief Scientific Officer's report was published. In particular, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already beginning to influence how services operate and how staff work:

- AI tools are starting to reduce administrative burden by supporting routine tasks such as drafting correspondence, summarising information and managing documentation.
- AI is increasingly being used to assist the interpretation of imaging, pathology and other clinical data, helping clinicians make faster decisions and supporting earlier diagnosis.
- Digital and AI-enabled tools are also being used to support discharge planning, risk prediction and operational decision-making, helping services manage demand and capacity more effectively.
- Emerging "ambient" technologies are beginning to support clinical documentation by recording consultations and producing structured notes, reducing the time staff spend on record keeping.

HEIW is actively working to utilise and integrate Artificial Intelligence within NHS Wales, primarily focusing on workforce education, training and digital confidence. The increasing use of AI across health services is likely to change how staff work, how services are delivered and what skills will be required in future.

For HEIW, this means ensuring that the workforce has the knowledge and confidence to use AI safely and effectively, and that education and training keep pace with technological change. Our IMTP therefore includes actions to develop a more structured approach to AI education and workforce readiness.

Workforce Trends and Census

The 2021 Census remains a key source for long-term demographic patterns, but updated Welsh labour-market intelligence shows evolving challenges:

- South-east Wales continues to experience population growth, while many rural and western regions remain stable or declining, a trend reinforced by ongoing StatsWales monitoring.
- NHS Wales employs a significant proportion of the Welsh working-age population, and economic inactivity remains a concern.
- Labour Force Survey data remains under review due to response-rate issues, meaning caution is required when interpreting employment trends. The shift towards a new Transformed Labour Force Survey will inform future analysis.

The latest NHS Wales Workforce Trends Report (March 2025) reinforces the value of data-driven modelling, presenting updated insights on workforce size, demographics, sickness absence and labour-market conditions.

Overall, the NHS Wales workforce has grown over the last five years from 83,000 to just under 100,000 (a growth of c 20%). This has been accompanied by a disproportionate impact on the pay bill, and has raised questions about the extent to which improvements in productivity and changes in models of care have been delivered as a result of this growth. Continued growth of this size and scale is clearly unaffordable in the current financial context and given the changing shape of the labour market.

Workforce intelligence continues to highlight pressures linked to an ageing workforce, sickness absence and changing expectations around flexibility and career pathways. At the same time, recent growth in training numbers is changing the experience mix in services and increasing the need for supervision and support.

We are using this evidence to shape our IMTP by placing greater emphasis on retention, educator capacity, flexible training pathways and improved tracking of how trainees move into employment, so that education investment translates into service impact.

Whilst maintaining education and training pathways will continue to be an imperative, this IMTP will see an increased focus on supporting our current workforce to ensure that they can do their best and most productive work.

Against projected declines in the working-age population and a continued rise in economic inactivity, NHS organisations

must continue to focus on innovative approaches to recruitment, retention and pathways into employment.

On the supply side, global shortages of healthcare workers continue. The World Healthcare Organization (WHO) maintains an estimated projected shortfall of 10 million health workers by 2030, and current UK-wide shortages in key specialties (e.g., radiology and oncology) remain prevalent in Wales.

The proportion of NHS Wales staff aged 50+ remains significant, with updated trend data showing a stable but high proportion of older workers in the 2025 workforce profile and growing evidence of generational shifts in expectations, including increased demand for flexibility, portfolio careers and non-linear progression routes. Recent data has also highlighted continued increases in less-than-full-time training uptake.

Despite evident system-wide challenges, the most recent NHS Wales workforce reports (2024–25) show several positive movements, including:

- Increased workforce stability
- Reduced nurse vacancies
- Reduced agency spend
- Stabilised turnover, especially within nursing and midwifery.

Sickness absence remains a challenge, with the most recent official data revealing a 12-month average sickness absence rate of 6.2% to September 2024, slightly lower than the previous year. Sickness absence rates do, however, vary considerably by staff group, from 10.4% for healthcare assistants to around 2.5% for medical and dental staff. These patterns reinforce ongoing risks around burnout, well-being and retention.

Sustained increases in training commissions over recent years have expanded the younger workforce. While this strengthens long-term supply, our analysis has identified a growing ‘experience gap’ as newly-qualified staff replace experienced workers, leading to increased supervisory and mentorship demand across services. These challenges continue to affect productivity and necessitate targeted investment in supervision capacity and development roles.

Despite the challenges, we continue to identify significant opportunities to enable NHS Wales workforce transformation, including:

- Regional models of service delivery are expected to expand, influencing how workforce is deployed.
- The continued shift towards multi-professional working, new roles, extended skills and redesigned pathways.
- New entry routes, expanded work-based learning and multi-generational career pathways will be crucial to strengthening supply.

NHS Wales Staff Survey

The national findings taken from the 2024 NHS Wales Staff Survey provide further insight into workforce experience across the system. Whilst there have been improvements in areas such as patient safety, flexible working and leadership support, overall engagement has fallen slightly and there are signs of increasing pressure on morale, team functioning and staff involvement in decision making.

For HEIW, this reinforces that workforce sustainability depends not only on supply but also on experience. It underlines the importance of leadership development, supervision capacity, career pathways and workforce well-being, so that investment in education and training translates into a workforce that is able and willing to remain in NHS Wales.

Workforce Race Equality Standard

The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) report for NHS Wales provides further insight into workforce experience and progression across the system. The findings show that while the proportion of minority ethnic staff in the workforce continues to grow, disparities remain in senior representation, progression and recruitment outcomes, with evidence of continuing inequalities in appointment rates and career advancement.

The report also highlights ongoing differences in staff experience, including higher reported levels of discrimination, bullying and unequal access to development opportunities. Although some indicators show improvement, the findings reinforce that inclusion, fair progression and supportive workplace culture remain critical to workforce stability.

For HEIW, this underlines the importance of ensuring that education, leadership development and workforce planning support equitable access to training, progression and career pathways. It also reinforces the need to support inclusive leadership and workforce experience, recognising that retention, productivity and service quality are closely linked to how staff experience the system.

Technological Factors

Digital Blueprint and Ways of Working

The NHS Wales Digital Blueprint sets the direction for how digital services will support future healthcare delivery and highlights system-wide challenges, including fragmented governance, variation in digital capability and workforce skills gaps.

For HEIW, this reinforces the need to align workforce planning, education and leadership development with the future digital operating model. It also highlights the importance of a more consistent, system-wide approach to digital skills and capability.

HEIW's role in workforce development positions it as a key enabler of the Blueprint, ensuring that investment in digital services is supported by a skilled, confident and adaptable workforce.

Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) Priorities

NHS Wales has established a revised Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) leadership governance structure to strengthen strategic alignment, oversight and delivery across the system. This includes a national Leadership Board, supported by a Delivery Board and a number of advisory and enabling groups, including the Workforce Capabilities Group.

These arrangements are intended to provide clearer national direction, improve coordination between organisations, and ensure that digital priorities are aligned with wider service and workforce transformation. The governance model also supports a more consistent, 'once for Wales' approach to digital delivery.

For HEIW, participation in this structure ensures that workforce, education and digital capability considerations are embedded within national decision-making, supporting alignment between digital investment and workforce readiness.

Legislative Factors

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to improve social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being.

HEIW has established three well-being objectives which are delivered through its IMTP. These comprise:

1. **A Flexible and Adaptable Workforce**
   In 2030, NHS Wales staff will feel supported, valued and equipped with the skills to adapt to evolving strategic health priorities. A multi-skilled, multi-generational workforce will work together to prioritise prevention, creating a healthier future for all and strengthening health.

2. **Embedding Compassionate Leadership**
   In 2030, compassionate leadership will shape the culture of NHS Wales, where people feel valued, heard and empowered. Leaders at all levels will be supported to grow, creating a diverse, inclusive, and resilient workforce that nurtures future generations and drives excellence in care.

3. **A Culture That Supports Well-being**
   In 2030, we will lead by example in creating a workplace where people feel safe, valued, and empowered. Through a culture of psychological safety, inclusion, and engagement, we will not only enhance well-being and resilience within our workforce but also inspire and influence positive change across NHS Wales.

Social Partnership Duty

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 is a Welsh law designed to improve public services and well-being by embedding fair work and social responsibility into public sector purchasing. It has resulted in the creation of a Social Partnership Council for Welsh Ministers to consult with employers and worker representatives, and public bodies, including HEIW, are required to:

- Work with trade unions / staff representatives to set well-being goals and achieve consensus.
- Consider the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales when purchasing goods, services, or works.
- Promote 'fair work' to ensure, for example, that supply chains enforce employment rights and provide training.

UK Medical Education Reform

UK-wide developments in medical education are likely to influence training pathways, assessment approaches and expectations around flexibility in medical careers. Of particular note, the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act 2026 – which received Royal Assent on 5 March 2026 – mandates that UK medical graduates and specific priority groups are given preference for NHS Foundation and Specialty training posts. The law:

- Aims to reduce intense competition from international applicants, addressing the "placeholder" job crisis and prioritising homegrown talent.
- Applies UK-wide, covering the Foundation Programme and postgraduate specialty training.

HEIW will need to respond to these developments – noting the expectation that it will apply to specialty offer stages for 2026 and apply to both shortlisting and offers for 2027 – while ensuring that arrangements remain appropriate for the Welsh context. Our IMTP therefore includes actions to progress reform of medical education and training in line with national developments and workforce needs.

Changes to Regulation

In addition, wider UK developments affecting professional regulation form an important part of the context for this plan. Changes in regulatory expectations and pressures facing regulators may influence training standards, workforce supply and the delivery of education and training across the UK. Regulatory changes that are currently under consideration include:

- **Reforming Regulatory Legislation**: The UK Government has renewed its commitment to reforming the legislation of all major healthcare regulators, starting with the General Medical Council (GMC), followed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- **"Accepted Outcomes" in Fitness to Practise**: Introduction of a new fitness to practise model that allows regulators to resolve cases consensually with the registrant (e.g. through agreed conditions) without needing a full public hearing, speeding up the process.
- **Increased Regulatory Autonomy**: Regulators will have more flexibility to determine their own operating procedures and rules without requiring new legislation or lengthy parliamentary approval for minor changes.

HEIW will be integral to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Leng Review. This is an independent UK review published in July 2025, which made 18 recommendations to strengthen patient safety, training, and the integration of Physician Associates / Assistants (PAs)

and Anaesthesia Associates / Assistants (AAs) within the NHS. All recommendations were accepted by the UK Government. The review has implications for PA / AA training pathways, progression, and workforce development and requires the following actions by HEIW:

- Develop and publish a governance framework to support the safe deployment, training, and supervision of PAs and AAs.
- Develop guidance to support early-career deployment and development for PAs.
- Develop supervisor training resources aligned with national supervision standards.
- Work with UK partners on recommendations requiring a UK-wide approach, including changes to professional titles and development of credential qualifications.
- Quality assure appraisal arrangements for PAs and AAs in Health Boards and Trusts and provide direct support for PA appraisal in primary care settings.

UK Leadership and Management Framework and Potential Regulation

Initiated in response to the Messenger review – a major, independent report on leadership and management across NHS England and social care published in 2022 – the NHS is implementing a new Leadership and Management Framework. The Framework is included as a commitment within the 10-Year Health Plan and will seek to professionalise, standardise, and regulate managers via a Code of Practice, mandatory training, and competency standards. Specific regulatory implications will likely include:

- A requirement to regulate NHS board-level leaders and their direct reports within core NHS organisations through a disbarring system, overseen by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- The need to implement a single set of unified, core standards that are expected to lead to mandatory accredited training and development.
- The introduction of a new behaviour-based, standardised appraisal framework for NHS managers and leaders.
- Increased accountability for leaders to achieve EDI outcomes, with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) tasked with stringently enforcing equal opportunity measures.

NHS Wales has been an active contributor to the development of the Framework and, as the body responsible for workforce development and leadership training in NHS Wales, HEIW will have a crucial role in driving its implementation in Wales. This will necessitate the development of an Implementation Plan that encompasses mapping and baselining, communication and contextual adaptation to ensure that the Framework aligns with Welsh policy, culture, values, and workforce needs.

Environmental Factors

Climate change and environmental sustainability are expected to have growing implications for health services, both in terms of the impact on population health and the resilience required of services.

For HEIW, this means ensuring that the workforce is equipped to respond to these challenges and that our own ways of working support wider NHS Wales decarbonisation and climate adaptation ambitions. This includes embedding sustainability considerations into education and training, reducing the environmental impact of how we operate and building HEIW resilience to the impacts of climate change.

PESTLE Analysis

Implications for HEIW

Taken together, the strategic context described in this chapter highlights the key implications that have shaped the development of HEIW's IMTP, and identify the need to:

- Shift attention to supporting current workforce, optimising performance and productivity, recognising continued growth is not sustainable.
- Develop more agile and future focused approaches to workforce planning and modelling that can respond proactively to changes in supply and demand.
- Identify how future workforce models will change to take advantage of technological developments.
- Expand and extend access to leadership and management development.
- Refocus on skills not roles, reflecting the need for multi-professional approaches and an increase in generalism.
- Strengthen Workforce sustainability by supporting recruitment, retention, supervision capacity and workforce experience.
- Ensure that investment in education translates into deployable Workforce capacity, not simply increased training numbers.
- Support the shift towards community-based, multi-professional and digitally enabled models of care.
- Equip the NHS Wales workforce with new and extended skills, including digital capability, to respond to changing service needs.
- Maintain strong partnerships with education providers and ensure a sustainable pipeline of learners and graduates.
- Retain flexibility in planning and delivery so HEIW can respond with alacrity to evolving national priorities while maintaining stability in education supply.

Stakeholder Engagement

As a national organisation, effective partnership working is essential to HEIW's role. We work closely with other NHS organisations and Welsh Government, alongside education providers, and all-Wales partners such as Social Care Wales and Medr. We also engage with professional bodies, regulators and colleagues across the UK where this supports shared workforce and education priorities.

Our approach to engagement is guided by HEIW's Strategic Communications and Engagement Framework. The framework supports a coordinated and prioritised approach to engagement, ensuring activity is aligned to HEIW's statutory functions, strategic priorities and organisational objectives.

IMTP Engagement Sessions

We have met with NHS Wales Health Boards, Trusts and national organisations during December 2025 and January 2026. These IMTP 'engagement sessions' afforded us an opportunity to share national and organisation-specific workforce and commissioning intelligence, present our emerging strategic priorities, and explore how we might best support the workforce needs of our stakeholders. We have been able to discuss the priorities and challenges of our NHS Wales partners, and we have identified opportunities for alignment and collaboration that are reflected in our plan.

Stakeholder Reference Group

HEIW benefits from the insights of an active and well attended Stakeholder Reference Group chaired by the HEIW Chair which meets four times a year to consider matters of strategic significance.

The October meeting of the Stakeholder Reference Group focused on IMTP priorities and identified the need for:

- Focus on digital skills and literacy, including increasing the responsible use of AI.
- Greater focus on adaptable, broad-based training in professional settings – including developing "generalists" and the role of the educator.
- Development of multi-disciplinary skills via multi-disciplinary training and education.
- Clinical skills academies – developing the existing workforce.
- Focus on the Primary and Community Care Workforce, including increased access to local placements and flexible learning pathways.

Staff Engagement

Our staff have been integral to the development of our IMTP. We have:

- Reviewed the implementation of the 2025-28 HEIW IMTP with senior leaders, ascertained our impact, and identified those activities that will need to continue into 2026-29.

- Employed the Three Horizons Model to create a shared vision for HEIW and a plan for its realisation.
- Presented our emerging IMTP to all staff by means of our Staff Forum, inviting comments and committing to share further updates throughout the plan's implementation.
- Ensured that our Local Partnership Forum (LPF) is afforded opportunities to monitor the progress of the IMTP's development and to comment on its emerging priorities and objectives.

HEIW ‘Golden Threads’

HEIW’s Golden Threads are principles that underpin all of our IMTP’s strategic objectives and core delivery functions and which are evidenced across the breadth of our plan.

Equality and Diversity

The Welsh Government requires HEIW to deliver the expectations of the strategic equality plan, and its legal duties under the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty. To this end, HEIW is committed to fostering an inclusive, anti-racist, and diverse workforce, that aims to reflect the communities of Wales, and which fully embeds the requirements of our legal duties. This applies to our system wide functions as well as our organisation.

Our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2023-27 objectives comprise:
:

- **1.** Embed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the way we attract, recruit, retain and develop our HEIW Workforce.
- **2.** Advance Inclusive practices in the attraction, education and training of the future NHS Wales health workforce and leaders.
- **3.** Strengthen engagement with our workforce, stakeholders, communities, and service users to inform and direct our work.

HEIW has a prioritised set of actions to drive a more representative and inclusive workplace in response to the Workforce Race Equality Standard.

Quality

In line with our legislative and regulatory requirements, our commitment to quality is embedded across the breadth of our activities with a particular focus on education and training.

Sustainability

HEIW’s role embraces our system wide functions as well as our organisation. Our focus is on reducing the environmental impact of our own activities, including our estate, travel, procurement and ways of working, and ensuring sustainability considerations are reflected in our business planning and decision-making.

Across the wider system, HEIW contributes through our role in workforce planning, education and commissioning. This includes supporting the development of a workforce able to respond to climate-related service pressures and ensuring that sustainability considerations are reflected in education, training, leadership development and future workforce models.

Welsh Language

Within HEIW, our focus is on meeting our Welsh Language Standards, ensuring our services are accessible in Welsh, and supporting staff to develop their Welsh language skills where appropriate.

More widely, HEIW actively promotes the Welsh language within NHS Wales, focusing on bilingual service delivery and

the principle of the ‘Active Offer’. Our embedding of the More than just Words / Mwy na Geiriau framework across our activities and those we commission helps to ensure that the Welsh language is treated as a core element of health and social care.

Through our role in education, workforce planning and commissioning, we support organisations to strengthen Welsh language provision, promote opportunities for learners and staff to develop Welsh language skills, and help ensure the future workforce is better able to deliver services in Welsh where required.



Chapter 3:
IMTP Strategic Priorities



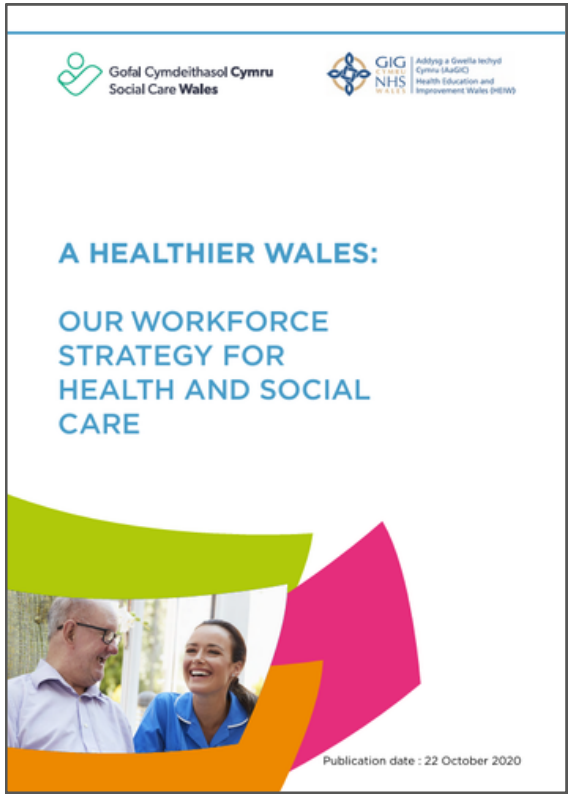
GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Addysg a Gwella Iechyd Cymru (AaGIC)
Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

This chapter describes the structure that we have employed for our IMTP, comprising our Strategic Priorities for the next three years (2026-29), and the objectives that we have developed to be the focus of our work during 2026-27.



Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care

Our IMTP has been developed in the context of 'A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care' and its seven themes.



Theme	Description
An engaged motivated and healthy workforce	By 2030, the health and social care workforce will feel valued, fairly rewarded and supported wherever they work.
Attraction and recruitment	By 2030, health and social care will be well established as a strong and recognisable brand and the sector of choice for our future workforce.
Seamless workforce models	By 2030, multi-professional and multi-agency workforce models will be the norm.
Building a digitally ready workforce	By 2030, the digital and technological capabilities of the workforce will be well developed and in widespread use to optimise the way we work, to help us deliver the best possible care for people.
Excellent education and learning	By 2030, the investment in education and learning for health and social care professionals will deliver the skills and capabilities needed to meet the future needs of people in Wales.
Leadership and succession	By 2030, leaders in the health and social care system will display collective and compassionate leadership.
Workforce supply and shape	By 2030, we will have a sustainable workforce in sufficient numbers to meet the health and social care needs of our population.

Strategic Priorities 2026-29

The focus of our IMTP 2026-29 is encapsulated by five specifically developed Strategic Priorities which respond to the strategic context described in Chapter 2, whilst facilitating delivery of the ambitions of the Workforce Strategy, the Welsh Government's priorities and our statutory functions.

We recognise that delivering and embedding cultural change and workforce optimisation will require a longer-term focus. Our strategic priorities therefore encompass all three years of our IMTP 2026-29, identifying where HEIW will focus its effort and resources in both the short and medium term. We recognise that these will need to be reviewed in light of new priorities and plans developed by the new government.

Our 2026-29 Strategic Priorities comprise:

1 Shaping the conditions for a productive, healthy and engaged workforce

Workforce sustainability and workforce productivity depend not just on supply but on supportive and compassionate workplace cultures and effective staff involvement. HEIW will focus on improving the quality of staff experience data, targeting national workforce initiatives through better use of staff survey and workforce insight. HEIW will also continue to shape and support the Workforce workstream of the Value and Sustainability Programme.

2 Optimising leadership and management development

Leadership quality directly influences culture, performance and staff experience. This priority strengthens the national leadership and management offer, ensuring consistent standards, compassionate leadership principles and alignment with NHS priorities to support system improvement.

3 Reshaping and transforming our current workforce models

Existing workforce models were designed for different patterns of care. As services shift towards prevention, community delivery and digitally enabled practice, workforce models must actively support service transformation through new skill mixes and ways of working.

4 Transforming education and training to meet changing needs

Education and training must be flexible, sustainable and responsive to changing learner and service needs. This priority focuses on modernising delivery models, improving flexibility, strengthening clinical learning capacity and improving affordability, while maintaining quality and consistency across Wales.

5 Future-focused workforce planning

Workforce supply and demand are increasingly uncertain. The system requires stronger and more responsive long-term planning capability and clearer national and regional scenarios to reduce imbalance and support sustainable decisions. This priority develops planning, analytics and modelling capability to inform longer-term workforce decisions.

IMTP Objectives and Delivery Programmes

Building on the strategic framework that we employed for our IMTP 2025-28, our 2026-29 Strategic Priorities will be delivered by means of three pillars of activity. These focus specifically on our 2026-27 deliverables and ensure that we are able to translate our medium-term strategic intent into clear, deliverable commitments that are supported by appropriate governance and oversight. The three pillars comprise:

Our objectives are measurable, realistic and deliverable by the end of 2026-27, with clear Executive leadership and Senior Responsible Officers (SROs).

Development Objectives

Targeted and time-bound actions to deliver transformation and change in line with the expectations of the Welsh Government Remit Letter.

Core Delivery Work Programmes

Actions that relate to the breadth of our statutory and operational functions that require ongoing resource to support delivery and improvement during 2026-27.

Supporting Work Programmes

Delivery of the infrastructure and capability required to deliver both development and core activities.



HEIW Strategic Framework 2026-29

HEIW Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care

- Engaged, Motivated and Healthy Workforce
- Attraction and Recruitment
- Seamless Workforce Models
- Digitally Ready Workforce
- Excellent Education and Learning
- Leadership and Succession
- Workforce Supply and Shape

HEIW Statutory Functions

Strategic Priorities

Medium-term priorities that deliver strategic shifts in line with the Workforce Strategy

1. Shaping the conditions for a productive, healthy and engaged workforce
2. Optimising Leadership and Management Development
3. Reshaping and transforming our current workforce models
4. Transforming Education and Training to meet changing needs
5. Future focused health workforce planning

Development Objectives

Key development programmes and projects that will deliver the strategic priorities

Golden Threads

- Equality and diversity
- Quality
- Sustainability
- Welsh Language

Core Delivery and **Supporting Work Programmes**

Cabinet Secretary Priorities

- Timely Access to Care
- Population Health and Prevention
- Community by Design
- Mental Health Access
- Women's Health
- Quality and Safety

Welsh Government Requirements

- Welsh Government Remit Letter
- NHS Wales Planning Guidance 2026-27
- Improving Performance Together

Chapter 4: Development Objectives

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Addysg a Gwella Iechyd Cymru (AaGIC)
Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

This chapter describes our Strategic Priorities for the next three years and the Development Objectives for 2026-27 that will drive their delivery. It also identifies the work that we will be undertaking with other national bodies to scope and develop collaborative approaches in relation to the health and care workforce.



Development Objectives 2025-26

Development Objective Templates

Our IMTP Development Objectives and their milestones/performance measures are summarised at Appendix A; each Objective was developed by means of a standardised template, which can be found at Appendix B. Templates were prepared by SROs and approved by Executive Leads; they describe key aspects of each objective's intended outcomes, quarterly delivery milestones, benefits, risks and enablers.

The templates are the basis of the performance reporting that we provide for Board and the Welsh Government. Their delivery will be monitored by our performance framework, with clear oversight arrangements in place. Templates comprise the following information:

- **Section A: Strategic Context and Alignment**

The Three Horizons Model was employed to explore the relationship between current operational needs and future innovation. For each Development Objective, SROs were asked to summarise the objective's current state (Horizon 1 – Where we are now), the desired end state (Horizon 3 – Where will we get to by 2029) and activities that will be undertaken during 2026-27 to facilitate delivery (Horizon 2). This approach sought to ensure that SROs were cognisant of both the three-year scope of the IMTP, whilst maintaining a focus on delivery during 2026-27.

- **Section B: Milestones / Performance Measures**

Each objective will be realised by means of the delivery of quarterly milestone/performance measures. SROs were asked to focus predominantly on quantitative measures and to indicate the data source that would be used to evidence delivery; qualitative measures were used to supplement quantifiable measures or where data availability was an issue. This approach was intended to facilitate the monitoring of delivery and to provide an indication of in-year impact and benefits.

- **Section C: Longer-term impact and benefits**

SROs were asked to look beyond milestones and performance measures and describe the contribution of each objective to the whole NHS Wales system and identify who benefits.

- **Section D: Risks**

In order to ensure that delivery risks have been identified and will be actively managed, SROs were asked to identify both those risks that may imperil delivery, as well as the risks of non-delivery, noting also that a number of HEIW's Development Objectives are dependent on the involvement of system partners.

- **Section E: Enabling Requirements**

SROs were required to describe the funding, workforce, communication and digital and data needs of each objective, thereby ensuring that activities are sufficiently well resourced and facilitating prioritisation where required.

1 Shaping the conditions for a productive, healthy and engaged workforce

Having the right conditions for a productive, healthy and engaged workforce is central to workforce sustainability. While the education and training pipeline remains important, workforce growth alone will not secure improvement. Services need staff who are supported, safe and able to work effectively in practice. This priority focuses on how HEIW can help create conditions that enable staff to stay, contribute fully and sustain performance over time, ensuring that workforce investment translates into safe and effective care delivery.

Recent workforce intelligence highlights ongoing pressure in staff engagement, involvement and team culture. Declining staff involvement in decision-making, variation in inclusion scores and concerns about safety from abuse in patient-facing settings underline that workforce sustainability is affected by workplace conditions. Early results from the 2025 NHS Wales staff survey indicate that the engagement score has dropped since 2024. Addressing these factors is essential to improving retention, engagement and productivity, and requires a more systematic use of staff survey, workforce and culture insight at a national level.

HEIW's focus for 2026-29 will remain on supporting employers to strengthen compassionate, inclusive and flexible cultures that respond to staff feedback and experience, providing better access to data and insights to inform local action, and supporting the development of the "well led" approach being introduced as part of the new Accountability Framework. Through the National Retention Programme, we have worked with NHS organisations to improve staff experience, strengthen compassionate leadership and promote flexible working. This programme will be evaluated during 2026–27, with a view to ascertaining its next steps and to consider the need for a greater focus on professions and settings where turnover and sickness absence remain high, including more targeted support informed by national and local retention metrics. Attention will be given to areas where staff survey findings indicate reduced trust, lower involvement or emerging pressures within teams.

Workforce well-being remains a key area of concern. NHS Wales sickness absence levels remain high at 6.4% in 2025–26, with mental health-related absence continuing to feature prominently. Although national well-being initiatives and guidance have been implemented, sustained improvement requires clearer alignment between intelligence, intervention and measurable impact. For 2026–27, we will undertake national analysis of staff survey, workforce and absence data to identify priority risks and work with Public Health Wales and system partners to target action where it will have greatest effect, with a clearer line of sight between identified drivers of absence and the support offered.

Workforce sustainability also depends on equitable experience and opportunity. Evidence from Workforce Race Equality Standard reporting and wider staff survey findings continues to highlight disparities in experience, progression and representation for some staff groups. Addressing these

inequalities is integral to improving engagement, retention and leadership pipelines, and will form part of our approach under this priority rather than being treated as a separate compliance exercise, with equality insight informing national workforce and culture interventions.

As services shift further towards primary and community delivery, we will strengthen engagement with the independent contractor workforce. During 2026–27 this will include progressing inclusion of primary care contracted services within national staff survey infrastructure, subject to appropriate information governance and proportionate reporting arrangements, and ensuring that national workforce initiatives reflect the needs of general practice, community pharmacy, dental and other contractor services.

Optimising workforce performance and efficiency is vitally important for NHS Wales in order to ensure that we support our workforce to deliver the best possible care and value for patients, staff, and the wider health and care system. We will therefore work with Welsh Government and NHS Wales Performance and Improvement to identify and develop opportunities to optimise workforce performance and efficiency across the breadth of NHS Wales through the Value and Sustainability Programme. This includes a specific focus on job planning, agency and bank use, optimum ward staffing models, and sickness absence.

The work required to realise such opportunities is not merely confined to Strategic Priority 1 and is evident across the full extent of our Development Objectives.

Year 1 Development Objectives

- **1.** Evaluate the impact of the national retention programme with a view to inform next steps.
- **2.** Scope and develop a culture and experience dashboard to provide insights for NHS organisations.
- **3.** Continue to improve mechanisms to collect staff experience, feedback and data, including primary care.
- **4.** Use analysis and insights from staff experience to drive national interventions.
- **5.** Work in partnership to support the collection and analysis of workforce equality data to improve intelligence on disparity in workforce experience to inform evidence-based action.
- **6.** Advance and enable the Welsh language skills and awareness of the current and future workforce through partnership working in order to implement More Than Just Words and the Welsh Language Standards.

2 Optimising Leadership and Management Development

HEIW supports NHS Wales leadership through tailored, 'Once for Wales' development, coaching and talent management. We commission and deliver specialised programmes across a range of levels, including the Emerging Leaders Programme, the Welsh Clinical Leadership Training Fellowship and Executive Talent Management Hubs. Together, these strengthen effective leadership and management, driving service improvement and transformation, enhancing compassionate cultures and workplace conditions, and supporting succession planning. Evidence from the NHS Wales Staff Survey and the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) highlights the need to increase our focus on diversity in leadership and to continue supporting leaders to prioritise staff well-being, and we must continue to evaluate the contribution of leadership training to system-wide improvement.

A key priority within last year's IMTP was the piloting of a new operational manager development programme in response to recommendations identified in the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG). This pilot has been successfully completed and positively evaluated, with full rollout planned for 2026-27, subject to resource availability. The initial phase focuses on operational managers at Band 6-8A, approximately 1,200 individuals across NHS Wales.

The anticipated launch of the UK Management and Leadership Framework by NHS England will require the review and reshaping of leadership and management development at all levels, working in collaboration with NHS organisations. The Framework establishes a Code of Practice, core competencies and a national curriculum designed to professionalise management and improve care quality, regardless of professional background. NHS Wales intends to align with these national standards, and HEIW will take on a new area of leadership responsibility and system leadership by assuming a central role in developing and implementing a phased rollout plan during 2026-27.

In addition, through the National Culture, Leadership and Succession Board, we have been asked to expand our support for Board Members. This includes specific priorities relating to CEOs, Executive Teams and whole-Board development. To enable this shift in focus, we will review our current portfolio and refocus resources accordingly. As a result, some existing programmes may be deprioritised or paused during 2026-27 to ensure capacity for these national priorities.

Changes to the Accountability Framework will have implications for a number of aspects of leadership practice (e.g. accountability, autonomy, risk) and HEIW will need to ensure that its leadership and management offer is aligned with the new requirements in order to facilitate effective system-wide accountability.

Year 1 Development Objectives

- **7.** Develop NHS Wales implementation plan for the UK leadership and management framework to include recommendations from CMO and CNO review of clinical leadership.
- **8.** Implement the operational management development programme.
- **9.** Implement targeted Board-level development programmes.
- **10.** Work with Welsh Government to scope potential for a Wales-wide culture and leadership programme, supporting the concept of “well led”.
- **11.** Continue to review and refresh the Wales Clinical Leadership Fellowship, Graduate Management Programmes and Advanced Clinical Leadership Programme



3 Reshaping and transforming our current workforce models

Whilst recruitment, retention and education and training pipelines remain essential, the future sustainability of the NHS Wales workforce also depends on redesigning workforce models and skill mix to support new ways of delivering care.

NHS Wales Community by Design (CbD) is a strategic approach focused on prevention, early intervention and care closer to home, ensuring hospitals are reserved for complex and specialised need. Delivering this model requires workforce transformation alongside service redesign.

The expansion and strengthening of community services will require:

- Development of effective Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) working and associated skills to support integrated teams (including GPs, nurses, pharmacists, AHPs and social care staff).
- Increased capability in prevention, co-production and population health.
- Development of administration, coordination and support functions aligned to neighbourhood models.
- Targeted workforce planning support linked to contractual reform and national negotiations.

Supporting the shift to neighbourhood models of care and the delivery of care closer to home has been a strategic priority for HEIW since its establishment, and we have consolidated the people and programmes supporting primary care into a single Primary Care Deanery. This will provide better coordination and use of resources to progress the strategic workforce plan for primary care, the multi-professional primary care academies and continued education, training and development of the contractor workforce.

We will continue to work closely with the NHS Wales National Programmes and Clinical Networks as they evolve, supporting and leading on all Wales workforce solutions where resources allow, and continuing to implement priorities from 2025-26 such as perioperative workforce development. The latter will be critical to the success of the surgical hubs programme.

Our professional workforce transformation programmes (including AHP, Healthcare Science and Psychological Professions) are focused on strengthening workforce intelligence, clarifying career pathways, embedding advanced practice governance and supporting skills-based deployment models aligned to Community by Design and national clinical drivers. Their work will build on the foundations established in 2025-26 and will transition from framework development to implementation and impact.

We will work collaboratively with the Welsh Government to consider the findings of the independent review into TrainWorkLive (TWL), the national and international attraction campaign launched by the Welsh Government to promote Wales as an excellent place for doctors to train, work and live. Specific deliverables will be collaboratively

developed once the review – which is due to conclude during 2026 – is published and the recommendations shared with HEIW, although these will likely include the development of options for the future of the scheme.

We will continue to implement our strategic workforce plans, balancing the delivery of priorities with available funding. The most recent of these is the perinatal workforce plan, which will be revised to address those recommendations contained in the All-Wales Maternity and Neonatal Assurance Assessment report "Pathways to Safer Beginnings". We have completed the implementation of the mental health plan and will be working with the Strategic Programme for Mental Health to develop a second phase of work to align with recent Welsh Government strategies. The implementation of the pharmacy plan will also be completed early in 2026-27.

Year 1 Development Objectives

- **12.** Lead/complete implementation of appropriate national workforce solutions to support National Programmes subject to resources, in collaboration with NHS Performance and Improvement.
- **13.** Implement once for Wales health professional workforce transformation and development priorities for AHP to respond to NHS priorities.
- **14.** Implement once for Wales health professional workforce transformation and development priorities for HCS to respond to NHS priorities.
- **15.** Implement the Strategic Workforce Plan for Primary Care (SWPPC) and develop the broader primary and community care workforce, to deliver Community by Design (CbD).
- **16.** Targeted implementation of strategic workforce plan for Perinatal subject to resources, to meet recommendations of national MatNeo assurance assessment report.

- **17.** Targeted implementation of strategic workforce plan for Nursing, to align with CNO Strategic Vision for Nursing and Midwifery.
- **18.** Targeted implementation of strategic workforce plan for Genomics in collaboration with Genomics Partnership Wales.
- **19.** Development of Phase 2 strategic workforce plan for mental health to support WG Mental health Strategy and Strategic Programme for Mental Health.
- **20.** Oversee implementation of the PRIORITY II project to improve research skills for Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions.



4 Transforming Education and Training to meet changing needs

Education and training needs to evolve and adapt in order to meet changing needs and, as the strategic workforce body, HEIW needs to be planning ahead in order to build sustainable solutions for NHS Wales. Some of these changes are driven by the needs of learners, students and trainees, whilst others are subject to the impact of the legislation, policy and regulation that is driving reform and modernisation at a UK level (such as the NHS England-led postgraduate medical training review).

We committed last year to the development of an Education Strategy – a first for NHS Wales. The discovery phase of this strategy is nearly complete and includes an assessment of the current landscape of healthcare education, extensive stakeholder engagement, data gathering and analysis, and the identification of key challenges and opportunities. Our focus for 2026-27 will be on finalising the Education Strategy to drive reform and redesign, working closely with education partners. The strategy will shape the long-term vision for educating and training the healthcare workforce in Wales, guiding our commissioning decisions, driving system-wide transformation and supporting our response to national priorities.

In the meantime, there is an increasing focus on accelerated and modular approaches to multi-professional clinical skills development supported by blended models of delivery that include digital and simulation technology. This model has demonstrated significant benefits in other healthcare systems, and we are keen to implement this to expand the range of responsive 'once for Wales' offers that can boost productivity, improve effectiveness and enhance quality. We have submitted a business case to implement this model in endoscopy and will continue to scope the benefits and possibilities of using this approach across a wider range of planned care and diagnostic specialties.

The potential of emerging digital technologies is transforming the treatment of patients, models of care delivery and the needs of the NHS Wales workforce. Our role is to ensure that the workforce has the literacy, competence and confidence to utilise these new opportunities and we have already made significant progress in this through our Digital Capability Framework and our work on AI education. Upskilling our NHS workforce will necessitate significant Continuing Professional Development (CPD); digital skills will need to be embedded in education and training programmes. Building on the foundation provided by our Digital Capability Framework, the next three years will focus on ensuring the embedding of a range of digital skills across the breadth of the NHS Wales, whilst concurrently upskilling leaders to both lead the digital transformation of services and act as advocates for its benefits. For 2026-27, we will introduce new AI education models and AI skills development offers, and expand the Digital Capability Framework through our work with Tektology – an innovation, strategy and operational improvement consultancy. We will also implement Phase 2 of Y Ty Dysgu – the dedicated learning hub for all health and care staff across Wales – to both expand and improve our 'once for Wales' digital learning offer.

Year 1 Development Objectives

- **21.** Finalise the Education Strategy to drive reform and redesign and better meet future workforce needs.
- **22.** Progress with specific reform programmes in Post Graduate Medical Education aligned with the UK Medical Training review.
- **23.** Subject to funding, implement Phase 2 of the NHS Wales endoscopy academy, including the development of accelerated training at Llantrisant Health Park.
- **24.** Increase scope, role and standard of simulation in health education and training models to improve quality and safety, including through increased collaborative use of simulation resources across Wales.
- **25.** Advance the next phase of the national digital learning and leadership platforms to enhance the quality of education and leadership.
- **26.** Deliver safe, scalable AI-enabled education and workforce development for NHS Wales.
- **27.** Expand workforce digital capability to improve productivity, quality and staff experience.
- **28.** Complete and publish a HEIW CPD Strategic Framework.
- **29.** Develop an implementation plan to address the recommendations of the Welsh Government review into statutory and mandatory training.
- **30.** Support the delivery of priority apprenticeships within NHS Wales, working with Medr and in line with requirements.
- **31.** Continue to develop Codi to improve efficiency and experience for Residents, Education Administration and Recruitment teams.



5 Future focused health workforce planning

In recent years HEIW has focused on addressing some of the key constraints affecting the quality of workforce planning in NHS Wales including:

- The availability of accurate and comprehensive workforce data and knowledge of external factors impacting supply
- The skills, resources and training needed to undertake effective workforce planning at local and national level
- Learning from other countries about the potential benefits of national population-based workforce planning.

Leading, informing and guiding the continued development of strategic workforce planning capability across NHS Wales is a crucial aspect of HEIW's role, which is fundamental to achieving a collective responsibility for planning the future workforce and achieving a better equilibrium between workforce demand and supply. HEIW leads collaborative system-wide workforce planning across NHS Wales and has established communities of practice and peer engagement to facilitate this. We have applied learning from our participation in communities of practice with the World Health Organisation, recognising that workforce planning is a common challenge across international health systems. We have built strong foundations in recent years in both workforce intelligence and planning capabilities, which is enabling the transition from static workforce planning towards system-wide, data driven and agile workforce planning, which will underpin our work with Welsh Government to develop long-term workforce planning for NHS Wales. We have developed modelling capabilities, improved workforce data infrastructure, built workforce planning skills and knowledge, and have created a broader understanding of changing external workforce factors impacting supply, all of which will underpin our ability to transition to scenario based modelling and predictive analytics.

It is critical that workforce planning becomes more agile and scenario based to respond to and better anticipate the changes that affect demand and supply, including challenges like an ageing population and workforce, changes to the availability of workforce and skills leading to recruitment challenges, vacancy reductions and changing healthcare demand. Workforce planning is evolving with a change in focus from roles to skills, driven by the need to transform the workforce, make best use of the assets we already have to meet the complex needs of an ageing population, and integrate new technologies and treatments. This will require much closer collaboration across NHS organisations and stronger workforce information feedback loops to underpin joint planning. Our new Workforce Supply Oversight Group (WSOG) is the first step in strengthening system-wide workforce planning, providing strengthened governance. This group provides a collective NHS Wales approach to planning workforce supply and will act as a mechanism to proactively anticipate and respond to fluctuations and imbalances in workforce and skills supply. This Group will also be crucial to the delivery of our 2026-27 objective to collaborate with partners on solutions to short-term oversupply.

Leading the transition to future focused, agile workforce planning will be one of our strategic priorities for the next three years. Our focus for 2026-27 will be on developing the methodology for longer-term national workforce planning and scenario based modelling, developing workforce planning expertise and capacity (e.g. local, regional, shift-based), and developing further workforce data and insights that serve to deepen our understanding of the relationship between digital transformation and workforce planning.

We will continue to build on the work already undertaken to establish a Workforce Observatory, explore the potential to use technological solutions to improve planning and, as described last year, we will develop a Centre for Workforce Intelligence that will drive improvement in workforce planning through the provision of quality, robust workforce data as a single source of truth for NHS Wales. Our work will be informed by intelligence relating to national and global workforce challenges, new technologies and examples of best practice, all informed by feedback from our extensive stakeholder and partner networks.

Finally, HEIW will have a crucial role in supporting the new Welsh Government's commitment to develop a long-term workforce plan by autumn 2026. Although our specific deliverables will become clear as the development methodology is agreed, it is anticipated that we will, in the first instance identify key stakeholders and convene a Steering Group to take forward the plan's development. Moreover, as the strategic workforce planning body for NHS Wales with responsibility for commissioning education and training, the workforce plan will have a critical role in informing the scope and focus of our IMTP in future years.

Year 1 Development Objectives

- **32.** Develop the methodology for longer-term national workforce planning and forecasting scenarios to drive workforce supply decisions.
- **33.** Work collaboratively to explore and utilise short term and sustainable solutions for the employment of students post-graduation.
- **34.** Develop the annual education and training recommendations for the Welsh Government.
- **35.** Implement agreed 2026/27 commissioning recommendations for undergraduate and postgraduate/post registration education and training (Education and Training Plan) as key pipeline for workforce supply.
- **36.** Develop workforce planning expertise and capacity development at local, regional and national level.
- **37.** Develop workforce data and insights to support NHS Wales and Welsh Government.

Development work with other national organisations

In addition to the Development Objectives outlined above, HEIW is working closely with a number of other national bodies to scope and develop collaborative approaches in relation to the health and care workforce.

Digital Health and Care Wales

HEIW and Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) continue to work closely on digital skills development and digital literacy, recognising that a continuum exists between the wider workforce who increasingly need to use digital tools and data confidently in their roles (supported by HEIW), and the specialist digital, data and technology (DDaT) workforce responsible for designing, delivering and maintaining the national digital services and platforms that enable digitally enabled care (led by DHCW).

In 2026/27 we will be developing future scenarios to demonstrate the potential changes to workforce models, not just skills, in a digitally enabled health and care service. These will be critical in informing future workforce planning.

This work will be underpinned by improved workforce data and intelligence, including alignment of the data eco system development in HEIW with the direction of travel of the National Data Resource (NDR). Strengthening workforce datasets will enable more accurate modelling of workforce supply and demand, clearer insight into skills mix and deployment, and better evaluation of how digital change affects productivity and service delivery.

Public Health Wales

Building on our 25/26 IMTP, HEIW is supporting the work Public Health Wales (PHW) has been progressing regarding prevention and population health, as part of the Community by Design Programme. This focuses on ensuring that the workforce have the right skills, underpinned by the right education and training resources and curriculum. In response to the results of the NHS Wales Staff Survey for 2025 we will also be considering the development of evidence based national campaigns to support workforce well-being and address the underlying drivers of sickness absence.

NHS Shared Services Partnership

Joint activities with NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) include the continued improvement of the single lead employer model, access to core workforce data including for independent contractors, ensuring that the student streamlining and bursary processes are responsive to changes and new requirements, and liaising more closely regarding workforce supply decisions such as international recruitment.

A new area of joint work will relate to the implementation of the Future Workforce Solutions system, ensuring that roles are clear and maximum benefits are delivered.

NHS Performance and Improvement

New ways of working and organisational arrangements are being established in NHS Performance and Improvement (NHS P&I), and we will review our current mechanisms for

working with national programmes and clinical networks in order to identify key national workforce priorities. We will continue to support NHS P&I to develop their workforce delivery function through provision of workforce data and insights.

We will also be working collaboratively with the quality leads in relation to key work programmes such as the MatNeo assurance assessment, implementation of the quality management system and improvement skills training for the health and care workforce.

Social Care Wales

Both organisations continue to progress plans and work programmes under the umbrella of the Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care, aligning with the seven key themes. In particular we will continue to work closely in developing the next phase of the mental health workforce plan, and will work closely with the Strategic Programme for Primary Care. Early in 2026/27 we will be reviewing individual plans and identifying any additional areas for joint working that align with the future development of an integrated workforce.

Medr: The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

HEIW has worked with Medr since it was established in 2024, continuing a relationship that was in place with its predecessor organisation, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). This has focused on data sharing to support a consistent approach to quality assurance of HEIW-commissioned programmes at education providers across Wales, and is supporting alignment of performance assessment and action planning requirements to provide clarity and consistency of requirements, and reduce duplication.

Discussions are progressing to support a wider collaboration, for example in relation to pathways into and through education to widen participation and increase apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities, to support a wide range of programmes.

Chapter 5: Core Delivery and Supporting Work Programmes

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
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Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

Chapter 5 focuses on our Core Delivery and Supporting Programmes for 2026-27 to facilitate a full understanding of our role and function within NHS Wales.



Core Delivery Work Programmes

For 2026-27, our Core Delivery Programmes comprise:

Continue to review and recommission education and training underpinned by contractual arrangements working with higher and further education

It is imperative that healthcare education remains aligned with workforce needs, service transformation and national priorities, including community-based care, prevention, population health, digital innovation and the development of advanced clinical roles. This programme of work aims to modernise education provision through robust commissioning, procurement and governance processes with HEIs that maximise value for money while improving access to flexible, blended and high-quality learning opportunities.

Continue to educate, train and develop the dental workforce in Wales, ensuring that it is fit for the future and aligned to strategic shifts in contractual arrangements, training, service and patient need

Building on the Dental Strategic Workforce Plan, HEIW aims to support workforce retention, particularly among dental nurses, modernise training pathways, and develop innovative education and mentoring opportunities. The programme is closely aligned with anticipated dental contract reform and wider health system transformation, with an emphasis on creating a workforce that can deliver high-quality care within primary and community settings.

The programme will continue to strengthen dental workforce recruitment and retention, increase confidence among dental professionals, expand access to flexible learning and postgraduate training opportunities, and ensure that the workforce has the knowledge, skills and capabilities needed to meet changing patient needs and reduce inequalities in oral health. HEIW's efforts are ultimately concerned with the provision of a sustainable, skilled and adaptable dental workforce that can improve access to NHS dental services and support prevention-focused, community-based care closer to home.

By March 2027, fully implement Year 3 of the Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan (SPWP) whilst embedding independent prescribing, credentialing pathways and integrating advanced clinical skills into routine practice across all settings

This work programmes focuses on transforming the pharmacy workforce in Wales by embedding independent prescribing, credentialing and advanced clinical practice into everyday care. It builds on the Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan (SPWP) by strengthening education and training pathways from undergraduate study through to advanced practice, while also improving workforce intelligence and planning. The programme aims to ensure pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are equipped with the skills, support and professional development opportunities needed to take on expanded clinical responsibilities and respond to evolving healthcare demands.

By 2029, the ambition is to have a more clinically enabled, sustainable and data-informed pharmacy workforce that contributes directly to improved patient care and service delivery across Wales. Increased use of independent prescribing, clearer credentialing pathways and stronger workforce pipelines are expected to improve access to treatment, reduce pressure on other parts of the health system and support care closer to home. The programme will also help attract, develop and retain pharmacy professionals, ensuring a resilient workforce that can meet future population health needs while delivering safe, high-quality and person-centred care.

Continue to implement effective support for revalidation, appraisal and CPD through the Revalidation Support Unit on behalf of NHS Wales

HEIW is required to maintain and enhance the systems and support that underpin medical appraisal, revalidation and continuing professional development (CPD) for doctors across Wales. Through the Revalidation Support Unit (RSU), HEIW will continue to provide high-quality appraisal and revalidation services while preparing for the introduction of Codi, a new national digital platform that will replace the existing MARS and ORBIT360 systems. The work is designed to ensure that doctors have access to effective tools, guidance and development opportunities that support professional standards and lifelong learning.

The expected result is a more streamlined and resilient revalidation and appraisal system that supports both clinicians and NHS organisations. By 2029, the new digital platform will be fully embedded, providing reliable data, improved user experience and stronger assurance processes. Alongside this, continued investment in appraisal, CPD and leadership development programmes will help maintain a skilled and reflective medical workforce, contributing to high standards of clinical practice, patient safety and quality of care across Wales.

Support delivery of enhanced eye care services through expanded clinical skills for optometrists

HEIW will continue to strengthen and expand enhanced eye care services in Wales by increasing high-quality training and placement opportunities within community optometry. Building on the success of the Advanced Training Practice (ATP) model, this programme of work seeks to grow placement capacity, particularly in underserved areas, while broadening opportunities beyond independent prescribing to include specialist eye care pathways and interprofessional learning. A key focus is creating a supportive learning environment for both trainees and supervisors, helping practitioners develop the skills and confidence needed to deliver advanced eye care closer to patients' homes.

Over the longer term, the initiative aims to create a more accessible and sustainable eye care workforce by reducing training bottlenecks, improving geographical equity and increasing the number of clinicians qualified to provide enhanced services. The expansion of ATPs is expected to support faster progression through training, strengthen collaboration between primary and secondary care, and reduce pressure on hospital eye services. Ultimately, the programme will help improve access to timely eye care, support workforce retention and development, and ensure patients benefit from high-quality services delivered within their local communities

Strengthen the quality and continuous improvement of education and training across HEIW through effective use of the HEIW Quality Management System

HEIW's remit necessitates that it monitors, understands and improves the quality of education and training across Wales. To this end, it seeks to bring together information from a wide range of sources – including learner feedback, trainer insights, programme reviews and quality monitoring activities – into a more coordinated Quality Management System (QMS). By creating a clearer organisational view of the learning environment, this work programme aims to identify emerging issues earlier, support evidence-based decision-making and drive continuous improvement across all professional groups.

The long-term ambition is to establish a mature and fully integrated quality management approach that provides consistent oversight of education and training quality across HEIW and NHS Wales. This will enable quicker identification and resolution of risks, stronger organisational assurance and more targeted improvement activity, while improving the experience of learners, trainers and education providers. Ultimately, the programme will support the development of a highly skilled workforce by ensuring that education and training environments remain safe, effective and responsive to future workforce and service needs.

Implement a continuous improvement programme for practice-based training and education environments

This programme of work is concerned with the evolution of practice-based education so that healthcare students gain greater exposure to the settings and models of care that will shape the future NHS Wales workforce. The programme will expand and strengthen placement opportunities in primary and community care, increase interprofessional learning, and ensure a more consistent and sustainable approach to placement delivery across Wales. Alongside growing capacity, the work will focus on improving placement quality, amplifying the voices of educators and learners, and embedding Welsh language and cultural considerations within the learning experience.

By 2029, students across all commissioned healthcare professions will spend a significantly greater proportion of their training in community-based environments, helping them develop the skills, behaviours and understanding needed for person-centred, preventative and place-based care. The programme is also expected to strengthen mental health awareness, broaden exposure to system leadership and innovation, and create learning experiences that better reflect contemporary service delivery. In doing so, it will support the development of a more adaptable, confident and future-ready workforce equipped to meet the changing needs of the population of Wales.

Continue to deliver National Senior Leader Succession Planning and Development

It is essential that NHS Wales has a strong and sustainable pipeline of future senior leaders. To this end, HEIW will maintain a coordinated national approach to succession planning, talent management and leadership development. This programme will refresh the NHS Wales Succession Planning and Talent Management Strategy, strengthen progression pathways into executive and chief executive roles, and continue to support leadership development through established talent programmes, induction offers and executive-level development opportunities. A key emphasis is placed on creating fair and inclusive pathways that improve representation and widen access to senior leadership roles across the system.

HEIW's ambition is to deliver a mature succession planning framework that provides greater visibility of leadership readiness, capability and progression across NHS Wales. Through stronger talent pipelines, nationally agreed leadership standards and improved workforce intelligence, the programme aims to enhance organisational resilience and leadership continuity while fostering more diverse, compassionate and system-focused leadership cultures. Ultimately, this will help ensure that NHS Wales is equipped with the senior leadership capacity needed to navigate future challenges and deliver long-term service improvement.

Work with Welsh Government and regulators to support implementation of regulatory reform, and new and changing roles, including MAPs, RNA and CAAPs

During 2026-29, HEIW will support the safe and effective introduction of new and evolving healthcare roles in Wales, particularly Medical Associate Professions (MAPs) such as Physician Associates (PAs) and Anaesthesia Associates (AAs), alongside the potential introduction of the Registered Nursing Associate (RNA) role. Working closely with Welsh Government and professional regulators, HEIW will lead the development of education, supervision and governance arrangements to ensure these roles are integrated consistently across NHS Wales. Key priorities include establishing national supervision guidance, strengthening appraisal processes, embedding governance frameworks and preparing the education and placement infrastructure required to support future workforce growth. The intended outcome is a well-supported and clearly governed workforce in which new professional roles contribute safely and effectively to service delivery.

A number of challenges could affect delivery – much of the programme is dependent on Welsh Government decision making, regulatory developments and, in the case of RNAs, legislative changes to the Nursing and Midwifery Order. There is also a risk that variation in employer capacity, inconsistent adoption of governance arrangements, limited data availability and pressures on supervisors could slow implementation or create differences in how roles are deployed across Wales. In addition, ongoing national discussions regarding MAPs, including the wider UK policy context and legal challenges associated with the Leng Review recommendations, may influence the pace and direction of the programme.



Continue to implement the strategic framework for NHS Wales Careers

The NHS Wales Careers Strategic Framework aims to strengthen the attraction, awareness and accessibility of careers across the health sector. By means of the Framework's delivery, HEIW will expand careers information and resources, increase engagement opportunities with schools, colleges and communities, and use targeted campaigns to raise the profile of health careers, particularly in areas facing workforce shortages. It also seeks to widen access to NHS careers by reducing barriers for under-represented groups, supporting career progression for existing staff, and developing clearer career pathways through future-focused, multiprofessional career frameworks. Alongside this, work will continue to enhance digital careers resources and prepare for the future development of the Careersville platform.

The long-term ambition is to position health and social care as a career destination of choice in Wales, supported by a modern, digital-first careers service that provides lifelong guidance and personalised support. By 2029, the programme aims to deliver more accessible and trusted careers information, stronger partnerships across education and careers services, greater use of digital tools and analytics, and increased access to mentors and ambassadors. Ultimately, this is intended to influence career choices, improve recruitment into health professions, strengthen workforce supply pipelines and ensure that more people are encouraged to begin, develop and sustain careers within NHS Wales.

Deliver a programme to support the People Profession in Wales

This programme of work concerns HEIW's efforts to develop a stronger, more connected and professionally confident People Profession workforce across NHS Wales. Building on the foundations established since 2021, the programme will embed the NHS Wales People Profession Map as the national framework for career development, helping staff better understand career pathways, identify development needs and navigate progression opportunities. Alongside this, HEIW will deliver a targeted development offer for senior workforce and organisational development leaders, using workforce intelligence and professional insights to strengthen leadership capability and support system-wide transformation.

The intended outcome is a highly skilled, nationally aligned People Profession that is recognised for its impact on workforce wellbeing, organisational performance and service improvement. By 2029, NHS Wales aims to have consistent professional standards, clearer and more inclusive career pathways, stronger succession planning arrangements and enhanced leadership capacity across the profession. Through the introduction of national career development tools, greater access to learning and mentoring, and a more strategic approach to talent management, the programme will help create a confident, future-focused workforce capable of delivering high-quality people services that support both NHS staff and the communities they serve.

Supporting Work Programmes

The delivery of our IMTP will be enabled by a range of supporting functions including finance, people and facilities, communications, digital, planning and performance. Where these are the focus of significant in-year deliverables, they are a focus of Supporting Programmes, which comprise areas of key development work that will facilitate the delivery of multiple Development Objectives and Core Delivery Programmes. For 2026-27, our supporting programmes comprise:

HEIW Internal Workforce Plan

One of the actions in our People and Organisational Development Strategy was to develop a strategic workforce plan for HEIW to ensure that our resources are effectively mobilised across HEIW to deliver on our development and operational commitments for the next few years.

The size of our workforce has remained relatively stable over the last few years and we acknowledge that, in view of the current system-wide financial challenges, our emphasis moving forwards need to be on maximising value and productivity. The internal workforce plan will therefore seek to support our people to do their best work, focusing on ensuring that our people are in the right places, with the right skills and at the right time, and that we are sufficiently flexible and agile to achieve a balance in terms of workload, quality and value for money.

HEIW Operating Model

It is now eight years since our establishment, during which time we have taken on a number of new functions and areas of responsibility. During 2025-26 we started to review our ways of working to ensure that we remain agile and flexible to changes in the environment and can optimise delivery.

This review will continue through the next year with the aim of identifying a new target Operating Model and detailed implementation plan during 2026-27. Implementation will be facilitated by a Co-Design Team comprising colleagues from across HEIW; stakeholder views will also be sought as part of this process.

Strategic Equality Plan

As highlighted earlier in this document, our Strategic Equality Plan 2023-27 (SEP) sets out how we will meet our Public Sector Equality Duty and advance equality, diversity and inclusion across our role as both an employer and system enabler.

In 2026-27, we will ensure equality considerations are reflected in leadership, organisational culture, workforce priorities and service planning. We will implement the Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan Policy Assurance process, providing in-year assurance against national EDI action plans and supporting compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Delivery will focus on evidencing progress through data, benchmarking and learning, alongside preparation for the statutory review of the SEP in 2027.

Communications and Engagement Strategic Framework

HEIW's goal is to have a mature, data-driven communications and engagement function that actively supports statutory duties and strategic priorities. Stakeholders will clearly understand HEIW's role, value and impact; engagement will be targeted and insight-led, and supported by seamless digital access; communications and engagement capability will be embedded across the organisation.

Our objective for 2026-27 is to focus on delivery, consolidation and insight-led improvement, with specific actions including:

- Development of a single, prioritised Corporate Communications and Engagement Work Plan to drive high-impact strategic communications, media, digital and stakeholder activity to promote access to HEIW services.
- Website phase three development, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) re-tendering and future digital scoping, alongside improvements to user experience and digital integration.
- A stakeholder-wide survey to benchmark perceptions and understanding of HEIW, supported by targeted stakeholder mapping and analysis to strengthen key strategic relationships.

Data and Digital Strategy

The Data and Digital Strategy approved by the Board in 2023 outlines how we will deliver transformational change through innovative technology and improved data insights and intelligence, supporting us to maximise delivery of our statutory functions. The Strategy sets out how we will use digital solutions, data and analytics to strengthen delivery of our statutory functions and support decision-making across NHS Wales. It focuses on delivering high-quality digital services, developing a digitally skilled workforce, enhancing digital learning, establishing secure and trusted workforce intelligence, and strengthening cyber security and information governance.

In 2026-27, we will continue to modernise and enhance core digital platforms. We will build digital, data and AI capability across the organisation and advance the next phase of Y Ty Dysgu to strengthen the once for Wales digital learning ecosystem. We will establish the Centre for Workforce Intelligence and Planning to bring together workforce data, analytics and modelling into a single national function, providing trusted dashboards and modelling outputs to inform Education and Training Plan decisions and workforce planning. We will also strengthen cyber security and information governance through enhanced monitoring, compliance reporting and national assurance submissions.

Welsh Government Baseline Review

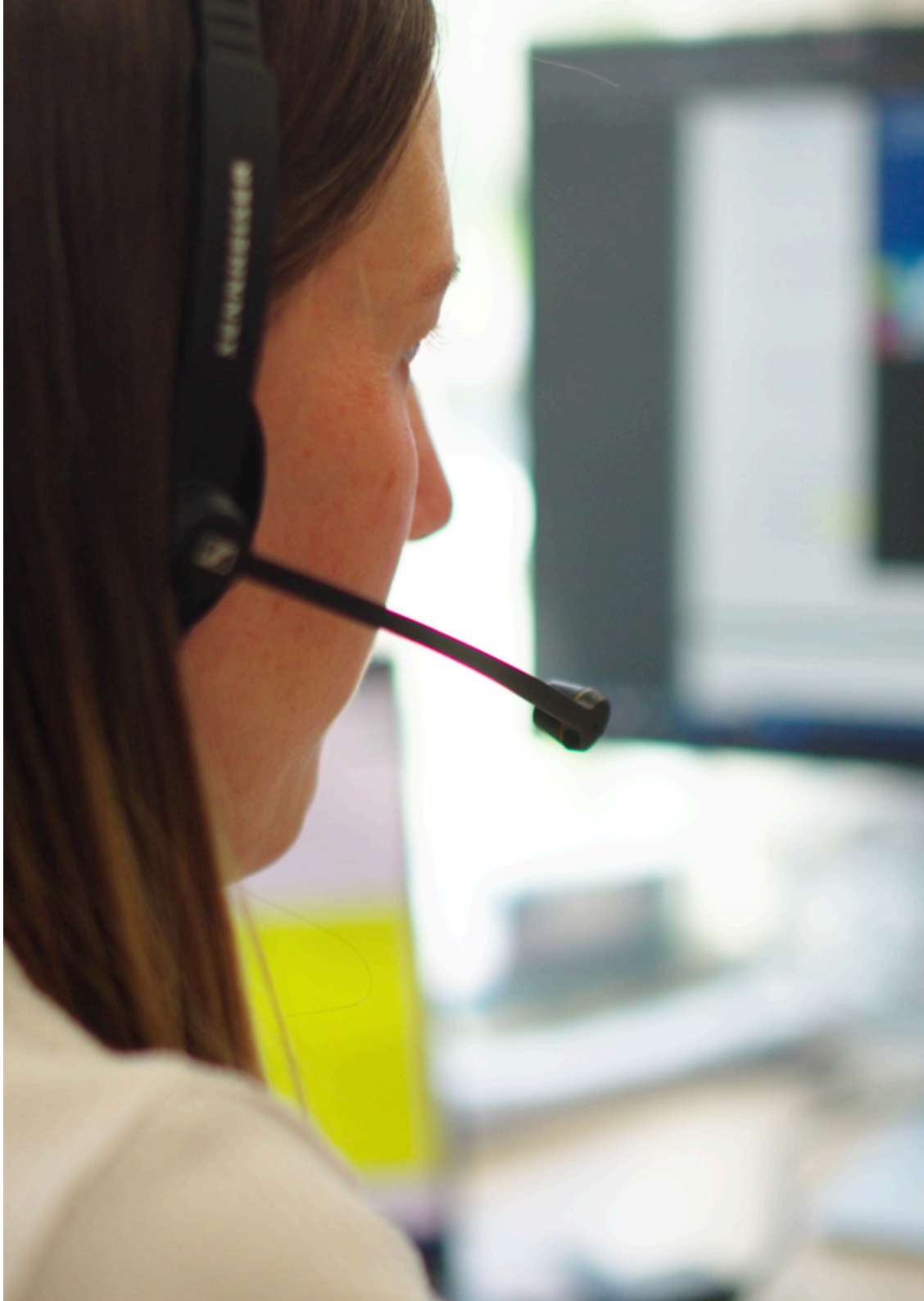
HEIW's Remit Letter 2026-27 requires that the organisation complete a baseline review during Quarter 1. This review – which will be submitted by 30 June 2026 – will seek to identify options and choices for any further savings that can be realised during 2026-27 and which go beyond achieving financial balance.

Chapter 6:
Financial Plan



GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Addysg a Gwella Iechyd Cymru (AaGIC)
Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

This chapter describes our financial plan, identifies how we will demonstrate value and sustainability, and confirms that we will deliver a balanced financial plan in 2026-27.



Financial Plan

Revenue Financial Plan: Approach and Key Risks and Assumptions

The revenue financial plan has been developed following confirmation of the revenue allocation for 2026-27 in the Remit Letter, received on 10 March 2026. The IMTP process has prioritised those strategic priority areas and actions within the Remit Letter and delivery of key statutory and regulatory functions, and assessed the resources required to deliver these during the year within the overall funding available.

HEIW has a starting annual revenue budget of £389.858m for the 2026-27 financial year. In addition, there are a few areas where further in-year allocations are anticipated / confirmed, and these are set out in the financial allocations table.

Whilst the core starting revenue allocation has not been uplifted, additional costs will be incurred because of UK and Welsh Government policy decisions. These include:

- Removal of the reduced rate of maintenance loan / bursary from September 2024 which has resulted in additional students choosing to take up the bursary. There will be an incremental increase in costs as each new cohort of students becomes eligible.
- Tuition fee cap increases for undergraduate courses to £9,790 (Sept 2026).
- Unfunded cost of increase in Employers' National Insurance Contributions.
- Increase in the Immigration Skills Charge / Certificates of Sponsorship – the UK Government has increased charges from December 2025 by over 30%.

In total, these cost increases are estimated to be over £5m and will effectively reduce the funding available in real terms. In previous years, Welsh Government has acknowledged the financial risk in relation to policy changes regarding the bursary and tuition fees and agreed that HEIW use any in-year financial slippage to mitigate or provide support to HEIW in managing any financial risk.

The Education and Training Plan makes up the largest part of HEIW's financial plan (c. 85% of total spend). The financial plan assumes that education and training will be commissioned at the level assumed within the funding agreed in approving the ETP for 2026-27. In most areas this will be either maintaining training numbers at current levels or commissioning undergraduate places at the minimum level allowable within current contract arrangements. The financial plan also makes assumptions regarding attrition (students leaving courses) and average bursary rates – actual rates are likely to differ and will need to be managed within the total funding available.

The financial plan will also require other inflationary cost pressures to be managed within the overall funding allocation – e.g. digital inflation, energy / fuel inflation, Service Level Agreement (SLA) uplifts with other NHS Wales bodies etc.

The financial plan assumes that the recurrent costs of existing and future pay awards are funded in full and reflected in revenue allocation adjustments.

The Remit Letter confirms that the initial revenue funding allocation will be maintained at £389.858m, including £5.2m that Welsh Government have, for 2026-27, transferred from recurrent to non-recurrent allocation as part of a total Running / Programme Cost allocation (£58.551m). This funding is currently used to support the delivery of key priorities within the Remit Letter, infrastructure which supports delivery of the Education and Training Plan and discharging some of HEIW's statutory and regulatory obligations. Therefore, it will be important that there is a timely discussion with Welsh Government officials to determine the ongoing funding and delivery of these beyond 2026-27.

The Remit Letter states that the Education and Training Plan funding (£331.307m) is ring fenced. WG have provided further clarification on the ring-fencing arrangement (dated 21 March 2026) which states that WG approval will be required for any formal virements / changes in values in relation to any financial commitments which fall outside the ETP, but where HEIW intends to fund them via the ETP funding component of HEIW's overall allocation. This applies to financial commitments which are recurrent and non-recurrent.

Any financial implications of the findings which result from the baseline review requested in the Remit Letter have not been reflected in the financial plan. The review is expected to be completed by 30 June 2026, after which point the financial plan will be reviewed to take account of any agreed changes.

Capital Financial Plan: Approach and Key Assumptions

HEIW's Discretionary Capital has been confirmed as £112k for the 2026-27 financial year and will support minor in-year capital priorities to be taken forward. The capital programme will be finalised following a process of reviewing projects and priorities with budget holders and other relevant partners. This will be approved by the Executive Team having considered these priorities against the organisation's strategic objectives.

HEIW also receives strategic capital funding. This currently comprises £567k which relates to ongoing refresh of the organisation's IT programme including a contribution (£400k) to developing Codi (digital platform). There are discussions with Welsh Government officials regarding the ongoing investment in Codi – including replacement of a number of legacy systems and associated business change.

Effective Financial Management

Delivery of the financial plan requires robust financial systems and controls and effective financial leadership and management, to deliver the IMTP priorities within available financial resources. This includes:

Leadership

- Board assurance of a resource plan that sets out HEIW's intention to comply with the statutory requirement for a financially balanced IMTP whilst delivering a plan to deliver its strategic priorities.
- Clear and effective leadership by the Executive Team.
- Timely planning, monitoring, support, and action by the Finance Team.
- Effective working with all Executive Directors, Senior Leaders, Budget Holders, and Departments.
- Visible and timely intervention and interaction by all Executive Directors, Senior Leaders, and Budget Holders.
- Interrogation and collaboration of strategies, plans and approaches with other NHS organisations.

Using a Value-Based Approach to Commissioning and Development Activities:

- Utilising a Value-Based approach to articulate the system benefits of investing resources in Education and Training and other workforce priorities.
- Embedding a robust and prudent approach to business case development.

Strong Discipline – Utilising the Grip and Control Guidance and Checklist:

- Disciplined financial management of all expenditure commitments including additional controls and actions in 2026-27 that reflect the level of risk in the plan.
- Continuous and detailed monitoring and management of the financial position.
- Timely corrective response to any variation from plan.
- Identification of risks and opportunities including potential savings and resource that can be re-deployed.
- Adherence to the standards and requirements of good governance.

Ensuring Excellent Assurance and Governance:

- Effective budget holder engagement to deliver the Plan and provision of training in support of the management of budgets.
- Provision of high quality, accurate and timely financial advice for budget holders, the Executive team and HEIW Board.
- Expert support and technical advice to budget holders to enable the development of robust plans and business cases that demonstrate value for money.
- Continuous evaluation of systems to identify areas of innovation or improvement and timely actions in response to audit recommendations.

Engagement with Budget Holders:

- The Finance Team will continue to provide regular timely and high-quality reports and support for budget holders.
- The Finance Team will ensure that Budget Holders are provided with training to understand their responsibilities.
- Further strengthen financial forecasting and foresight linked to performance to identify early financial risk and opportunities.

Using available tools to demonstrate efficient use of resources where appropriate:

- Relevant and timely Performance Reporting aligned to the organisation's Performance Framework including the financial impact of deviation to planned activity.
- Use of relevant NHS Benchmarking.
- Application of efficiency measures where possible.

A summary of the revenue financial plan is set out in the following table:



2026/27 – 2030/31 HEIW IMTP Financial Plan

	Total Requirement 2026/27	Total Requirement 2027/28	Total Requirement 2028/29	Total Requirement 2029/30	Total Requirement 2030/31
	£	£	£	£	£
Board & Executive					
Pay	2,118,032	2,130,490	2,135,774	2,145,958	2,146,716
Non-Pay	-449,641	-449,641	-449,641	-449,641	-449,641
Total Executive Office	**1,668,391**	**1,680,849**	**1,686,133**	**1,696,317**	**1,697,075**
Finance, Planning & Performance & National Programmes					
Income	-218,448	-218,448	-218,448	-218,448	-218,448
Pay	3,191,981	3,235,676	3,252,406	3,287,788	3,295,785
Non-Pay	2,052,036	2,052,036	2,052,036	2,052,036	2,052,036
Total Finance & Corp.Serv	**5,025,569**	**5,069,264**	**5,085,994**	**5,121,376**	**5,129,373**
Digital and IT					
Income	0	0	0	0	0
Pay	4,825,192	4,934,645	4,992,632	5,023,159	5,029,232
Non-Pay	1,971,570	1,971,570	1,971,570	1,971,570	1,971,570
Total Digital	**6,796,762**	**6,906,215**	**6,964,202**	**6,994,729**	**7,000,802**
Medical & Pharmacy					
Income	-710,030	-710,030	-710,030	-710,030	-710,030
Pay	16,419,778	16,581,714	16,672,582	16,722,354	16,733,309
Non-Pay	9,832,651	9,832,651	9,832,651	9,832,651	9,832,651
TGS	94,765,486	94,765,486	94,765,486	94,765,486	94,765,486
GP Training	50,373,334	50,373,334	50,373,334	50,373,334	50,373,334
I&R	315,780	315,780	315,780	315,780	315,780
PGMDE	4,891,666	4,891,666	4,891,666	4,891,666	4,891,666
WCAT	2,228,231	2,228,231	2,228,231	2,228,231	2,228,231
WDTFT	232,773	232,773	232,773	232,773	232,773
Pharmacy	15,703,028	15,703,028	15,703,028	15,703,028	15,703,028
Dental Foundation Training	11,427,093	11,427,093	11,427,093	11,427,093	11,427,093
Relocation Expenses	2,547,800	2,547,800	2,547,800	2,547,800	2,547,800
Optometry	521,031	521,031	521,031	521,031	521,031
Total Medical Director	**208,548,621**	**208,710,557**	**208,801,425**	**208,851,197**	**208,862,152**
Education, Strategy & Transformation					
Income	-66,632	-66,632	-66,632	-66,632	-66,632
Pay	3,141,032	3,205,428	3,240,381	3,251,746	3,253,972
Non-Pay	865,990	865,990	865,990	865,990	865,990
Commissioning	155,214,312	155,214,312	155,214,312	155,214,312	155,214,312
Total Nursing	**159,154,702**	**159,219,098**	**159,254,051**	**159,265,416**	**159,267,642**
Nursing, Health Professions & Quality					
Income	0	0	0	0	0
Pay	2,102,418	2,412,142	2,372,453	2,401,107	2,405,423
Non-Pay	375,736	375,736	375,736	375,736	375,736
Total Nursing	**2,478,154**	**2,787,878**	**2,748,189**	**2,776,843**	**2,781,159**
Workforce and Organisation Development					
Income	-73,073	-73,073	-73,073	-73,073	-73,073
Pay	6,098,330	6,179,029	6,248,387	6,281,121	6,285,219
Non-Pay	4,991,205	4,991,205	4,991,205	4,991,205	4,991,205
Total Workforce & OD	**11,016,462**	**11,097,161**	**11,166,519**	**11,199,253**	**11,203,351**
Grand Total	**394,688,661**	**395,471,022**	**395,706,513**	**395,905,131**	**395,941,554**



The following table includes the revenue allocation as per the remit letter together with the other income funding assumptions for 2026/27:

		£m
Total Allocation 2026/27		**389.858**
Other Anticipated Income		
Mental Health Workforce Plan	2.745	
Psychological therapies	0.062	
Clinical Excellence Award	0.048	
Depreciation Funding	0.659	
IFRS16 Interest	-0.006	
Strategic Workforce Plan – Primary Care	0.141	
2025/26 Pay Award ESP	0.048	
2026/27 Pay Award A4C	0.961	
2026/27 Pay Award WDTFT	0.007	
2026/27 Pay Award Pharmacy SLE A4C	0.166	
Total Other Anticipated Income		**4.831**
Total 2026/27 Funding Assumption		**394.689**

Chapter 7:
Accountability, Delivery and Risks



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This chapter summarises our approach to the monitoring and delivery of our plan. It is imperative that we employ a robust performance management framework so that the delivery risks described in this chapter can be avoided or mitigated.



Accountability, Delivery and Risks

The HEIW Board has been engaged through the IMTP's development, and has:

- Reviewed last year's plan to identify whether any of its content remained extant
- Employed the Three Horizons Model to explore the relationship between current operational needs and future innovation
- Reviewed the outputs of our internal workshops and IMTP-focussed Stakeholder Reference Group
- Received and endorsed our new 2026-29 Strategic Priorities.

The Board received the Remit Letter for noting and the IMTP for formal approval in March 2026.

Performance Monitoring

The Board scrutinises and assures HEIW's performance and monitors the delivery of the IMTP through bi-monthly integrated performance reports.

As noted in Chapter 4, each of our objectives is underpinned by a plan that enables their implementation to be monitored, and which identifies:

- The baseline position and desired end point
- Alignment with our strategic drivers
- Quarterly performance measures and their means of assessment
- Benefit statements
- Delivery risks
- Enabling requirements.

HEIW's Performance Management Framework describes our performance management arrangements and identifies how the delivery of our IMTP will be monitored. This will involve:

- Monthly reporting to monitor the delivery of IMTP objectives and the use of RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings to provide assurance of progress.
- Embedding a culture of benefits, with reporting focussed on quantifiable benefits and impact measures.
- Implementing escalation arrangements for those objectives that are not proceeding according to planned timescales.
- A culture of accountability that empowers teams by delegating responsibility, encourages early warning of risks and a no-surprises approach, recognises achievements, and creates a supportive environment that encourage openness and communication.

Monitoring the delivery of our IMTP has been further assisted by the development of a 'performance app' that enables teams to report the status of their objectives on a monthly basis, and which is used to populate a 'performance dashboard'.

The Board receives regular reporting by exception to provide assurance on delivery against each IMTP objective and the

accompanying work programmes. This has been effective in focusing attention on objectives which are not on track. The reporting also incorporates indicators that are not directly related to the delivery of the IMTP, but which are important indicators of organisational performance. These include internal workforce (staff in post, turnover, sickness and training) and quality (including issues under management, trainee progression and support, and medical appraisals).

HEIW's overall progress is reported annually by means of an annual report. We will also report the IMTP's delivery by means of the new approach to NHS Wales oversight and interface arrangements that the Welsh Government has agreed for 2026-27. The arrangements will also entail a common reporting pack, and a single operational interface via NHS Wales P&I.

Change Control

As highlighted by the PESTLE analysis undertaken in support of this IMTP, this plan has been developed during a period of dynamism and change. It is therefore essential that we retain flexibility in planning and delivery; HEIW must be able to respond to the evolving expectations and national priorities of the new Welsh Government whilst maintaining an affordable and achievable work programme.

Where changes are required in response to the emergence of new priorities, they will be subject to robust change control. To this end:

- We will institute a clear change request procedure, whereby any proposed change is documented using a standard template that explains the change, the reason for it, expected benefits, risks, costs, and impacts.
- We will have defined roles and responsibilities: emerging changes will be scoped and developed by SROs and Directorates, with approval (and any resultant re-prioritisation of Development Objectives) the preserve of Executive Team.
- Each change will be evaluated and impact assessed for its effect on our Strategic Priorities, the delivery of pre-existing Development Objectives, budget, resources, timelines, risks, stakeholders.
- All changes will be recorded, with approved decisions documented and updated versions of the IMTP maintained by the Planning and Performance Team so all parties continue to work from the latest approved version.
- Stakeholders will be informed about approved changes, the reasons behind them, any actions required and their anticipated implications.

Delivery Risks

A number of key delivery risks have become apparent during the IMTP's development. These will need to be managed by means of the arrangements that the Board has in put place to monitor and manage HEIW's organisational risks. The arrangements include through HEIW's Risk Management Policy and the Board Assurance Framework.

The delivery risks that we have identified have the potential to jeopardise the delivery of different aspects of our plan. These will be monitored in year and managed and / or mitigated where required. In the event that some of these risks are realised, the feasibility of strategic priorities and / or objectives may need to be revisited.

Organisational Digital and Data Capacity

- **Description:** The majority of our Development and Core Delivery objectives require digital and data support to facilitate delivery. This is in addition to a number of specific objectives for which the Digital, Data and Engagement Directorate are responsible.
- **Impact:** In the event that the IMTP's delivery places significant and potentially unmanageable resource pressures on the Digital, Data and Engagement Directorate, HEIW may be unable to deliver its IMTP in full. Any such failure would impact on the realisation of anticipated benefits and could affect the service provided to WG and other NHS organisations.
- **Mitigation:** Requests for digital and data support have been prioritised as part of the IMTP's development; unanticipated requests for in-year support will be prioritised by the Digital and Data Planning and Prioritisation Group; the Executive Team will prioritise and oversee the data and digital delivery plan.

Reliance on short term funding

- **Description:** A number of IMTP objectives are reliant on short-term / non-recurrent funding to support staff and activities. There is a risk that anticipated funding is not forthcoming as a result of system-wide financial pressures, resulting in the loss of staff and the pausing of planned activities.
- **Impact:** HEIW would not be able to deliver the objectives described in its IMTP, resulting in possible service impact, in a failure to secure anticipated benefits and in reputational damage.

- **Mitigation:** HEIW has prioritised the objectives identified in the Remit Letter and our statutory functions. Any scope to take on additional work will be constrained until the provision of additional funding can be confirmed or core resources can be redeployed. Where objectives are subject to financial interdependencies, these have been described.

Financial challenges in the Welsh Higher Education Sector

- **Description:** The financial challenges faced by the majority of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may lead them to review their health education programmes, potentially divesting of those programmes that they consider to be financially unviable.
- **Impact:** Any loss or reconfiguration of health education programmes would risk destabilising Welsh student recruitment, creating inequalities in access to education and imperilling NHS Wales staff pipelines.
- **Mitigation:** We will continue to work with our partner HEIs to ensure that we have early sight of any potential changes to their health education portfolios; we will undertake scenario planning to understand the impact of any changes; in the event that a loss of places is confirmed, we will work with partner HEIs to identify and commission alternative providers.

Engagement requirements

- **Description:** Many of our IMTP objectives are subject to external interdependencies and require engagement with, and input from our partner organisations to deliver in full.
- **Impact:** Any impediment to full engagement may result in a failure to deliver our objectives, resulting in possible service impact, a failure to secure anticipated benefits and reputational damage.
- **Mitigation:** HEIW regularly reviews its communications and engagement processes and interactions, has developed and implemented a new communications framework, and will continue to optimise its approaches to ensure that meaningful engagement can be undertaken when required.



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